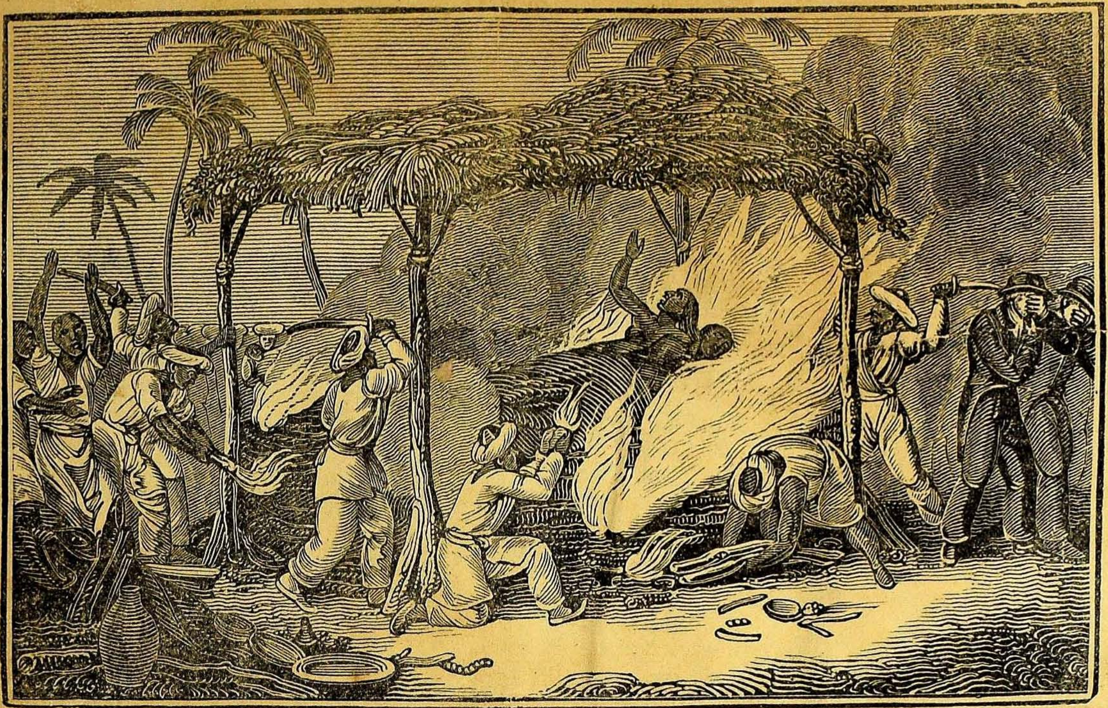

A SUTTEE; OR, THE BURNING OF A HINDOO WIDOW WITH THE BODY OF HER HUSBAND. (p. 11.)

Serfojee M. Rajah. 1829

THE

SUTTEES' CRY TO BRITAIN;

SHOWING FROM

ESSAYS PUBLISHED IN INDIA AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

THAT THE CUSTOM OF

Burning Hindoo Widows

IS NOT

AN INTEGRAL PART OF HINDOISM;

AND

MAY BE ABOLISHED WITH EASE AND SAFETY.

BY J. PEGGS,
Late Missionary in Cuttack, Orissa.

SECOND EDITION, ENLARGED.

" In childhood, must a female be dependent on her father; in youth, on her husband; er lord being dead, on her sons: if she have no sons, on the near kinsmen of her husband; he left no kinsmen, on those of her father; if he have no paternal kinsmen, *on the Soreign.*" — MENU.

" Shall we be in all time to come, as we have hitherto been, passive spectators of this nnatural wickedness?" — GRANT.

" The entire and immediate abolition of it would be attended with no sort of danger." — HARINGTON.

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PREFACE.

THE Author while residing in Orissa, having been an eye witness of the horrid rite of burning a widow with the body of her deceased husband, and being deeply impressed with its demoralizing influence, and the importance and facility of its suppression by the British Government, feels much satisfaction in re-publishing this Pamphlet. The first edition is nearly circulated, and it is with great pleasure that the Author acknowledges the liberal assistance for promoting the object of its publication received from various friends, particularly from T. F. Buxton, Esq. M. P. Cromer Hall; W. Evans, Esq. Allestree Hall, near Derby; G. Lawton, Esq. York, and Dr. Ash of Norwich. This edition contains various extracts from the last Parliamentary Papers on the Immolation of Hindoo Widows, printed by order of the House of Commons, May, 1827, and from the Speech of J. Poynder, Esq. on Human Sacrifices in India, delivered at the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, held March, 1827; (published by Hatchard, London;) and a new Section on the origin, nature, number, and atrocities of Suttees.

Through the liberality of a few friends some copies of this edition will be circulated among European Gentlemen in India, to promote unanimity of opinion on the subject of the Abolition of Suttees, and engage their important co-operation in accomplishing this great object. When shall Britain close for ever these appalling scenes of murderous superstition! When will she—

"Say but a single word, and save
Ten thousand mothers from a flaming grave;
And tens of thousands from the source of woe
That ever must to orphan'd children flow?"

What shall awaken Britain to consider, in a manner becoming her responsibility to India, the fact lately stated by two Hon. East India Proprietors, (Par. Pap. Vol. v. p. 32.) "*That probably no day passes on which some victims are not sacrificed to the horrid practice in India, and more especially in the Bengal Provinces!*" Is not the subject discussed in this Pamphlet worthy the attention of every humane, liberal, and pious mind? A Motion on the subject of the Abolition of Suttees is expected to be brought before the House of Commons in the present Session, and it is hoped that as the friends of humanity and religion in India have begun to "plead for the widow" in petitions to Government, they will persevere in these efforts till this "abomination that maketh desolate" is "buried 'midst the wreck of things that were." The concurrent opinion of so many European functionaries and other residents in India, (not excepting even the natives,) relative to the facility and importance of abolishing this dreadful rite, appears highly interesting, and calculated to inform and establish public opinion in this country on the propriety of suppressing this appalling custom.

May "the Father of the fatherless and the Judge of the widow, even God in his holy habitation" stir up the spirit of those who hold in their hands the destinies of the millions of India, to regard the Suttees' Cry, and thus bring upon themselves "the blessing of them that were ready to perish and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy."

Coventry, March 9, 1828.

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THE

Suttees' Cry to Britain,

&c., &c.

SECTION I.

Origin, nature, number, and atrocities of Suttees.

SUTTEE is the name given in India to a woman who immolates herself on the funeral pile of her husband, and denotes that the female is considered true or faithful to him, even unto death: the term is also applied to the horrid rite itself. "The origin of the custom will most probably be found in the voluntary sacrifice of a widow inconsolable for the loss of her husband, and who resolved to accompany him on the funeral pile; not with any idea that such an act could be acceptable to the gods, or any way beneficial to herself in a future existence; but solely because her affection for the deceased made her regard life as a burden no longer to be borne. The example of this heroine, if it remained the only incentive to Suttee, would have been rarely followed; but it of course excited admiration as a novelty; and in a short time the Brahmuns began to perceive, that if properly managed, Suttee might be made a very productive source of emolument;* and the most esteemed authors of the age were induced to recommend it as a most meritorious act, productive of good effect to the

* The expense of the Suttee witnessed by the Author at Cuttack, Aug. 19, 1824, was according to the pundit, as follows:—"Ghee, three rupees; cloth one rupee; Woman's new cloth, two and a half rupees; wood, three rupees: andawlet pundit received three rupees. Woman gave one rupee for some purpose; rice, one anna; beetlenut, two pice; flowers, one anna; cocoa, one anna; hemp, four annas; haldee, one anna; mateeanlet, chundun, doop, cocoanut, one anna, one pice; carrier, five annas; musicians, half a rupee; paring her nails, four annas; cutting wood, three annas: total fifteen rupees, five annas, three pice. Intended Shradda, (funeral feast), fifteen or twenty rupees." Thus thirty rupees (between three and four pounds sterling) was expended. The parties appeared very poor. On various occasions considerable sums must be realized by the Brahmuns and their adherents.

soul of the widow and her husband, and to those of the surviving members of their families: they also prescribed forms and ceremonies, in which the attendance of Brahmuns was of course indispensable. *Menu, and the most ancient and respectable writers do not notice Suttee*, it was therefore, in their time, either unknown or not approved. If the former, how comes it to be recommended in the more modern shasters, if the custom was not of the nature supposed? For no modern lawgiver would have ventured to praise an act not mentioned by his predecessors, if an example had not occurred, and been received with universal praise though a novelty and an innovation. If known, but not mentioned because not approved by Menu, the authority of the modern shaster is not sufficient to give any merit to the sacrifice. In the first case we do not find that the practice originated in the law, but that the law is the consequence of the practice; and that sacred authority is subsequently produced to enforce the merit of an act originating in the mortal feelings of affection, grief, despair, or some other passion of the mind, equally incapable of affording a hope that it would be acceptable in the eyes of the Deity." * (W. Ewer, Esq. Act. Sup. of Police, Lower Provinces, Calcutta, Jan. 1819.) It is a painful circumstance, that this barbarous custom, which existed prior to the Christian era, should not before this period have been annihilated by the progress of civilization, and especially the diffusion of the salutary influence of Christianity in the East.

Various detailed accounts of Suttees are communicated to the public through the periodical publications of Missionary Societies, the five volumes of Parliamentary Papers on Hindoo Immolations, and the Newspapers of the Presidencies in India. A few instances only of the nature of this inhuman rite are here given.

The following account of a Suttee is extracted from a Calcutta Paper, in June, 1824:—

"On my way to Kalee Ghaut (in the vicinity of Calcutta), whither I was accompanied by two friends, we overtook a kuttolee, borne on the shoulders of four men, having the corpse of the widow's husband upon it, followed by a palankeen, in which was the wife of the deceased. As we approached the palankeen, a person who walked near it, and appeared to be fanning the unhappy woman, hastily closed the pannels, and thus frustrated the design we had formed of conversing with her. We determined therefore upon proceeding to the appointed place, where we arrived about one o'clock, and learnt that the *Perwannah*† had not been received, but that it was expected in the course of another hour. The kuttolee and palankeen were put down on the banks of Tolly's Nullah, near the place where the horrid sacrifice was to be consummated. We here once more made an effort to see the woman, but without success. Foiled in every attempt we made to accomplish one of the primary objects of our going to Kalee Ghaut, we had no alternative left but to wait patiently the arrival of the expected Perwannah, which made its appearance at five o'clock, when the preparations for the diabolical business commenced. While these were going on, the unfortunate victim was led out, supported by three old men, in a state so utterly helpless and pitiable as to excite the commisseration of all who saw her, and arouse the indignant feelings of the few Christians present, at the toleration, under an enlightened Government, of a custom so abhorrent in its nature, and so repugnant to all laws, human as well as divine. Misery was depicted in the looks of the woman, and her general appearance was indicative of *anything but consent on her part*, to the barbarous practice to which she was to fall a victim. After the performance of some unmeaning ceremonies, she was conducted to the banks of the nullah, where she was bathed, and then covered with a new red saurree, in one end of which was

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* Par. Papers on the Immolation of Hindoo Widows. 1821, Vol. 1. p. 231.

† The permission of the British Government for the sacrifice

tied up a quantity of parched rice. The dreadful pile stood at a short distance from her. She trembled excessively, and appeared agitated to such a degree, that I could not but attribute her extraordinary emotion to her disinclination to fulfil the sacrifice. So unequivocal were the symptons of her repugnance to the commission of the horrid act forced upon her, that I am confident we could have dissuaded her from it had a fair opportunity been afforded. We were told that she would walk seven times round the pile, and then ascend it. This she commenced immediately after the corpse of her husband was put on it; but with such a tottering gait, that I expected every moment to see her fall. She was at last helped up to the pile, more dead than alive. No sooner was she laid by the side of her husband than *the barbarians about her bound her hands and feet with ropes*, placing at the same time a large quantity of straw and hemp on her body. *A couple of stout bamboos were also thrown across the pile, as if to secure more effectually the unfortunate victim.* The eldest son of the deceased then set fire to the pile, which was instantly in a blaze. I watched very narrowly to discover, if possible, whether the woman made any attempt to liberate herself, but the cloud of dense smoke which issued from the pile was unfavourable to the gratification of my curiosity; and amid the deafening shouts, which rent the air, of *Hurree bol*, her screams, if she screamed at all, were altogether inaudible. For a few minutes after the dreadful work was accomplished, I stood gazing at the still blazing pile, lost in reflections on the scene I witnessed, and resolving never again to harrow my feelings by courting a repetition of the disgusting sight."

The "Friend of India," for Sep. 1824, published at Serampore, contains an account of a Suttee at Cuttack, which the Author and some of his friends witnessed.—

"On Aug. 19, 1824, this place was defiled with innocent blood. About twelve o'clock the Judge very kindly sent a note to the Mission House, informing us of the intended Suttee. The woman was a Telinga, the wife of a Brahmun who had died that morning about daybreak. Her reply to the several questions proposed to her through the Telinga interpreter was, 'What have I any more to do with the world? I must go to my husband.' Support for life, and a conveyance to her own home were offered, but they were rejected. From my pundit I have gathered some particulars which cast light upon this dreadful rite. He stated, that it is customary to lament the dead with crying and noise, but she did not, saying, she was going to her husband. She said, she was a stranger and had nothing, and therefore desired the neighbours to provide what was necessary for a Suttee. She said also, that she had been a Suttee in *three former births*, and must be *four times more*, and then she should attain endless felicity. Those who should dare to prevent her, by confining her in a house or jail, their seed should die, and they should descend into hell. Some approved of this, others said, that as she had no son or daughter therefore she wished to die. To this she replied, she had a brother and sister, and in her own country many friends, but she wished to go to her husband. From joog to joog (age to age), in this manner, with the same husband, she was to be born and die.

"About half-past three o'clock we were informed that the poor woman was proceeding to the pile. I was then too unwell to venture out. Mrs. P——— saw her on the way and talked with her. About six o'clock in the evening I thought I would go to the spot, expecting the tragical business to be closed. I was however surprized to find nothing more done than the pile partly prepared for the awful sacrifice. The Judge and three other gentlemen, with some of our English congregation, were present, and a great number of Natives. Frequent and persevering efforts were made by the above humane gentlemen to dissuade her from her purpose, assisted by the members of the Mission who were present. She was sitting near the pile, with the corpse of her husband covered with a cloth lying near her, insensible of the dreadful preparatory work before her eyes. I knew two Telinga Brahmuns present, and taking them endeavoured to speak to the woman. I told her I was a Padree; that God had sent me and others to teach the people the true Incarnation, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins: that if she would go with me to my house she would be able to learn this knowledge; and that I would send her in a palkee to her own country: but if she ate fire and died now, how could she gain this knowledge, without which she could not be saved? I told her, thus to destroy herself was not God's will. I fear my translators were not faithful; but all the poor woman said was, 'Narayun, Narayun.'* This she repeated with a stupidity of mind truly indescribable. I laid hold of her hand to take her away, but she refused to go; and took hold

* A name of Juggernaut.

of my chin, which I afterwards understood was to give me her blessing. Mr. B——, one of the gentlemen present, was very desirous to convince her, by some ordeal, that she could not burn; but the infatuated woman played with a piece of fire like a child, and when her hand was pressed upon a coal she showed no resolution. The above gentleman lifted up one of her eyelids, and affirmed that she was *intoxicated.* This circumstance was stated to the Judge, and urged as a sufficient reason to forbid the horrid murder; but he thought it wanted evidence, and though deeply affected with the poor woman's fate, he hesitated to use his authority to save her. The pile, which was slowly preparing was about eight feet long and four feet wide, being elevated about two feet. At each corner were pieces of wood which supported a kind of roof, and different pieces of wood blocked up three sides of the pile. Some raw flax was laid on the top of the wood upon which the corpse was placed. Ghee was forbidden to be put on the pile by the Judge, that the poor woman might have the opportunity to escape, by feeling the effects of the fire gradually: a practice which, if the Suttee was always according to ancient custom to ascend the funeral pile while burning, or, if previous to its being lighted, was left unbound and unincumbered, might prevent the shedding of much innocent blood. As she had been touched by several persons after her first bathing, she went to the river and bathed again. I saw her enter the pile as a person would get into bed, and lay herself down by the left side of her husband and farthest from the entrance of the pile. The wood under the corpse, after a short time, burned fiercely; and it was horrible to see it consuming the head and elevated stiffened hand of the deceased, while the poor woman was scarcely touched by the devouring element. I stopped about a quarter of an hour, in hopes the unhappy sufferer might labour to escape; but, alas! no signs of it appeared: and after viewing the burning of the dead and the living till my feelings and concern for my health determined me to go away: I left the horrid circle and hastened home. All such outrages upon the principles of society are unnatural and inhuman; and when said to be from religious motives, a species of insanity; and hence may properly be suppressed by the powerful voice of reason and authority. O when shall these murders cease! Where does the salutary godlike power lie? or from what quarter will it originate to abolish them?"

A third account was communicated from Juggernaut in Orrissa, dated July 7, 1824, from my Colleague the Rev. W. Bampton.—

"The infatuated woman, whose death I witnessed, was the widow of a Brahmun who had died the same morning. The man's age seems to have been about forty, and the woman's thirty-five. The place where the Suttee took place is called Swurgu Dwar, which signifies the gate of heaven; and when I reached it I found the coolies employed in digging the hole. The hole or pit was circular, about six feet deep, its diameter at bottom perhaps a little less than its depth, and at top twice as much. Soon after my arrival, about twelve persons came, each of them bringing a load of wood on his or her head, for several of them were women. I charged the labourers with being accessary to the crime about to be committed, and the general reply was, in substance, that they worked for money, and did this work as they did other work, because they were paid for it. Carelessness or cheerfulness characterised all the Hindoos near or on the spot. The pit being finished, a quantity of water was mixed with cow dung and sprinkled on the margin about one third of the way down, in sufficient quantity to turn the sand its own colour; two ropes were also well wetted with the same mixture. On inquiring the use of two bamboos which lay near, I was told that they were *to stir the fire and turn about the bodies!* The bits of wood prepared for the occasion were between twelve and eighteen inches long, and on an average five or six in circumference; a quantity of them were now thrown into the pit, and a man at the bottom proceeded to set them up on their ends two or three thick round the sides, upon this he placed a second tier; and on the second, a third; he also covered the bottom perhaps five or six inches thick, so that the pit was now two thirds lined with wood. Soon after all was finished the dead man was brought on a rough bier, which I can readily suppose might have been made by a man in less than a quarter of an hour. I soon saw the procession, (if it may be called one,) halting a few hundred yards before me: the crowd was kept off the woman by a square made of four bits of wood, each five or six feet long: I believe the men who carried it were all Brahmuns. The rabble were preceded by some of their rude music, which was not playing when I got up to them. Unwilling to see her burn herself, my worthy companions Lieut. W. and T. B——, Esq. tried, several times to prevent the horrid deed, and I lent my feeble assistance, but all to no purpose. They halted twenty or thirty yards from the flaming pit where the last effort was made, and that failing her infamous coadjutors gave

her a lighted lamp, which I think she put into an earthen pot which she carried under her arm. In a little time all was confusion, and a scene, the most perfectly hellish that we ever saw, was presented to us; a way was made for the woman to the pit, and its margin was left clear, she advanced to the edge facing her husband, and two or three times waved her right hand; she then hastily walked round the pit, and in one place I thought the flames caught her legs: having completed the circle, she again waved her hand as before, and then jumped into the fire * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * At this moment I believe the drums beat, and an infernal shout rent the air, but I can scarcely say I know, all was confusion; a dense smoke issued from the pit, intermixed at intervals with partial bursts of flame; this was occasioned, I suppose, by quantities of powdered rosin being thrown into the pit by handfulls, and what was thrown in at one time went off in a sudden blaze, whilst what followed it obscured the pit with smoke. In a little time, however, they allowed the fire to clear itself, and we then saw the wretched woman in the midst of it: I think her posture was that of kneeling down and sitting on her heels; her body was erect and motionless, except that she sometimes moved gently, backward and forward, as if she bowed. The poor creature still kept her erect posture, but at length seemed partially to rise, and she pitched forward with her head against the side of the pit, about two feet from her husband's left hand. The motion of her head in this new position indicated pain, and she continued to live two or three minutes longer. The other gentlemen then went home, but I staid a little longer and saw the bodies taken out: for though the women are burnt in these pits, the bodies are taken out while they are distinguishable, and consumed in two different fires, (at least that is the case here,) and we are told it is done that the son may make sure of some fragments of *both* his parents to be thrown into the Ganges. Now the ropes came into use; one was doubled and the middle thrown down to catch the man's chin, one or two bamboo levers were then put under his head to raise it and get the rope round his neck, the rope was then twisted, that is, the two ends of it were twisted together, in order to fasten it, and they began to draw, but they failed, for the rope slipped off. Another man then attempted to fasten the rope, he succeeded, and they drew up the body with the exception, I think, of the legs, but it was quite dark, and nothing could be seen but by the light of the fire. As they were not very expeditious the ropes must have been in considerable danger of being burnt, but the people threw a little water on them occasionally to prevent it. They then tried to raise the woman, but could not easily get the rope round her neck, so they put it on her arm which projected in such a way as to favour their doing so; and, after twisting it well, they drew her nearly to the top of the pit, but they seemed afraid they should lose her again if they trusted entirely to her arm, so she was held just below the edge of the pit till another man put the other rope under her chin, and she was then drawn quite up. Some of the people then employed themselves in arranging the wood for the fires to consume the bodies, and I staid perhaps ten minutes longer, finally leaving the bodies on the brink of the pit. Such are the facts, and I leave them to produce their own proper effect."

The Suttee described in the wood cut, on the frontispiece, is narrated by the Rev. J. England of Bangalore, under the Madras Presidency, in a letter, dated June 12, 1826. He says,

"I received a note from a gentleman, that a *Suttee* was about to take place near his house. On hastening to the spot, I found the preparations considerably advanced, and a large concourse of spectators assembled, and continually increasing, till they amounted to six or eight thousand. On my left, stood the horrid pile. It was an oblong bed of dry cow dung cakes, about ten feet long, and seven wide, and three high. At each corner of it, a rough stake about eight feet in length was driven into the ground; and at about a foot from the top of these supporters was fastened, by cords, a frame of the same dimensions as the bed below, and forming a flat canopy to the couch of death. This frame must have been of considerable weight: it was covered with very dry small faggots, which the officiating Brahmuns continued to throw upon it, till they rose two feet above the frame work. On my right, sat the poor deluded widow, who was to be the victim of this heart-rending display of Hindoo *purity* and *gentleness;* she was attended by a dozen or more Brahmuns; her mother, sister, and *son*, an interesting boy about three years of age, and other relatives, were also with her. *Her own infant, not twelve months old, was craftily kept from her by the Brahmuns.* She had already performed a number of preparatory ceremonies; one of which was washing herself in a strong decoction of saffron, which is supposed to have a purifying effect. One effect it certainly produced; it imparted to

her a horrid ghastliness ;—her eyes indicated a degree of melancholy wildness, a forced and unnatural smile now and then played on her countenance ; and, indeed, every thing about her person and her conduct indicated, that *narcotics* had been administered in no small quantities. Close by me stood the *Fouzdar*, a native officer, who, besides regulating the police, is the chief military officer at the station. Under his authority and superintendence, this inhuman business was carrying on. So heartily did he engage in this murderous work, that he gave the poor widow twenty pagodas, (between six and seven pounds sterling,) to confirm her resolution *to be burned!* The pile being completed, a quantity of straw was spread on the top of the bed of cow dung cakes. An increase of activity was soon visible among the men whose "*feet are swift to shed blood.*" Muntrams (prayers or incantations) having been repeated over the pile, and the woman, and every thing being in readiness, the hurdle to which the corpse of the husband had been fastened was now raised by six of the officiating Brahmuns ; the end of a cord about two yards long, attached at the other end to the head of the bier, was taken by the widow, and the whole moved slowly towards the pile. The corpse was then laid on the right side upon the straw with which it was covered ; and four men furnished with sharp swords, one stationed at each corner, now drew them from their scabbards. The trembling, ghastly offering to the Moloch of Hindooism, then began her seven circuits round the fatal pile, and finally halted opposite to her husband's corpse, at the left side of it ; where she was evidently greatly agitated. Five or six Brahmuns began to talk to her with much vehemence, till in a paroxysm of desperation, *assisted by the Brahmuns*, the hapless widow ascended the bed of destruction. *Her mother and her sister* too, stood by, weeping and agonized : but all was in vain,—the blood-thirsty men prevailed. The devoted woman then proceeded to disengage the rings from her fingers, wrists, and ears ; her murderers stretching out their greedy hands to receive them : afterwards all her trinkets, &c., were produced, and distributed among the same relentless and *rapacious* priests. While in the act of taking a ring from her ear, her *mother* and *sister*, unable any longer to sustain the extremity of their anguish, went up to the side of the pile, and *entreated that the horrid purpose might be abandoned ;* but the woman fearing the encounter, and the strength of her resolution, without uttering a word, or even casting a *parting glance* at her supplicating parent and sister, threw herself down on the pile, and clasped the half putrid corpse in her arms. Straw in abundance was heaped on the dead and the *living ;* gums, resins, and other inflammable substances, were thrown upon the straw which covered the bodies, by one party of the Brahmuns, while muntrams were repeated at their heads by the other: six or eight pieces of kindled cow dung cake were introduced among the straw, at different parts of the pile ; ghee and inflammable materials were applied, and the whole *blazed* in as many places. The men with swords at each corner, then hacked the cords which supported the flat canopy of faggots—it fell and covered the lifeless corpse, and the living woman ! A piercing sound caught my ear ; I listened a few seconds, and, notwithstanding the noise of the multitude, heard the shrieks of misery which issued from the burning pile. In an agony of feeling, we directed the attention of the Brahmuns to this ; and *while so doing*, again, still louder and more piercing than before, the burning woman rent the air with her shrieks ! Several of the Brahmuns called out to the *half-consumed, still conscious and imploring widow*, TO COMFORT HER. The pile was now enveloped in flames, and so intense was the heat, that, as by one consent, the Brahmuns and spectators retreated several paces : they then sang a Sanscrit hymn ; the hymn ended, but not the shrieks and groans of the agonized sufferer : *they* still pierced our ears, and almost rent our hearts ! Scarcely conscious of what I did, in the midst of these vain repetitions I left this scene of fiendish barbarity."

The number of unhappy widows who thus annually perish, the victims of this appalling superstition, has, in former years been variously stated, and it appears (though doubtless undesigned) exaggerated. The following information may be relied on, being extracted from the official reports of the Magistrates in India, and printed in England by order of the House of Commons, from 1821 to 1827. It is however probable, that Suttees are occasionally perpetrated without ever being officially announced to the Police ; and no correct idea can be formed of the number that occur in the territories of tributary, allied and neighbouring Chiefs, whose subjects are not brought under the Laws and Regulations of the British Government,

but who are doubtless encouraged in the sanction of this cruel custom by British apathy and legislation. Though the number of Suttees in India is not so great as to preclude the possibility of its easy abolition, yet, it is so considerable as to call aloud for Britain to stretch forth her hand, and save those who are "drawn unto death and ready to be slain."

Number of Suttees in the different districts of the Bengal Presidency from 1815 to 1824.

	1815	1816	1817	1818	1819	1820	1821	1822	1823	1824
Calcutta Division	244	280	428	533	388	337	364	300	309	348
Cuttack Ditto	9	9	14	11	33	33	28	28	31	25
Dacca Ditto	31	24	52	58	55	51	52	45	40	40
Moorshadabad.....	11	22	42	30	25	21	12	22	13	14
Patna Ditto	20	29	49	57	40	42	69	70	49	42
Barelly Ditto......	15	13	19	13	17	20	15	16	12	10
Benares Ditto	48	65	103	137	92	93	114	102	121	93
Total	378	442	707	839	650	597	654	583	575	572

These numbers form a total in the Presidency of Bengal in ten years of	5997
In eight years, in Fort St. George, or Madras Presidency.........	287
In nine years in the Bombay Presidency..............................	248
There being no returns for Tanjore, from 1814 to 1819 inclusive, (17 being returned for 1820), lowest possible estimate for six years	40
In the Par. Papers, May, 1827, no regular returns are given from Madras. In the Southern Concan (Bombay) in 1824, 27; in 1825, 32. Northern Concan in 1825, 1 Suttee......	60
Total in ten years, for three Presidencies	6632*

As it may be interesting to see, at one view, the extent of the practice under the Bengal Presidency, where it chiefly prevails,† the following abstract is given from Par. Papers, May 18, 1827, p. 124.—

* See Par. Papers Five Volumes. Poynder's Speech, p. 4.

† The average number of Suttees under the Madras Presidency, from 1817 to 1819, (inclusive) was 61; and under that of Bombay, from 1819 to 1823, was 49.—How easily might these few poor widows have been saved!

ABSTRACT STATEMENT

Of the number of Hindoo Widows burnt or buried alive in the Zillah and City Courts of the Bengal Presidency, in the year 1824.

Division	COURTS.	No. of Suttees.
Calcutta Division.	Burdwan	56
	Hooghly	91
	Jessore	30
	Jungle Mehals	16
	Midnapore	22
	Nudeah	73
	Suburbs of Calcutta	34
	Twenty-four Pergunnahs	22
	Baraset	4
	Total..	348
Cuttack Com.	Cuttack	11
	Khoordah	13
	Balasore	1
	Total..	25
Dacca Division.	Buckergunge	23
	Chittagong	2
	Noacolly	..
	City Dacca	7
	Dacca Jelalpore	2
	Mymmensing	..
	Sylhet	..
	Tipperah	6
	Total..	40
Moorshedabad Division.	Beerbhoom	3
	Bhaugulpore	..
	Monghyr	..
	Dinagepore	..
	Maldah	1
	City Moorshedabad	8
	Purneah	1
	Rajshahye	..
	Rungpore	1
	Rungpore Commissioner	..
	Total..	14

Division	COURTS.	No. of Suttees.
Patna Division.	Behar	1
	Monghyr	..
	City Patna	..
	Ramghur	10
	Sarum	12
	Shahabad	18
	Tirhoot	1
	Monghyr	..
	Total..	42
Barelly Division.	Agrah	..
	Alligurh	1
	Barelly	..
	Shalyehampore	1
	Peelebheet	..
	Cawnpore	5
	Bhitowra	1
	Etawar	..
	Joint Ditto	..
	Furruckabad	..
	Mooradabad	..
	Nuygeena	..
	Meerut	..
	Boolunshuhur	1
	Saharunpore	1
	Muzuffer Nugger	..
	Deyrah Door	..
	Sirpoorah	..
	Total..	10
Benares Division.	Allahabad	5
	Bithora	..
	Bundlecund, S. Div.	5
	Bundlecund, N. Div.	2
	City Benares	16
	Ghazepore	33
	Gorukpore	17
	Juanpore	1
	Azimgurh	8
	Mirzapore	6
	Total..	93
	Grand Total..	572

The character of the unhappy victims of this dreadful custom, and the brutality which marks its perpetration, show how opposed it is to every principle of justice, humanity, and religion; and consequently, that it should be suppressed by the paternal British Government. The subject can rarely be considered *voluntary*. This is very forcibly stated by W. Ewer, Esq. Sup. of Police, Lower Provinces Bengal Presidency.—"It is generally supposed that a Suttee takes place with the free will and consent of the widow, indeed that she frequently persists in her intention to burn in spite of the arguments and intreaties of her relations. But there are many reasons for thinking that such an event, as a voluntary Suttee, very rarely occurs: few widows would ever think of sacrificing themselves unless overpowered by force or persuasion; very little of either being sufficient to overcome the physical or mental powers of the majority of Hindoo females. A widow who would turn with natural instinctive horror from the first hint of sharing her husband's pile, will be at length gradually brought to pronounce a reluctant consent; because, *distracted with grief at the event, without one friend to advise or protect her, she is little prepared to oppose the surrounding crowd of hungry Brahmuns and interested relations, either by argument or force.* Accustomed to look on the former with the highest veneration, and to attach implicit belief to all their assertions, she dares not, if she were able to make herself heard, deny the certainty of the various advantages which are supposed to attend the sacrifice: that by becoming a Suttee, she will remain so many years in heaven, rescue her husband from hell, and purify the family of her father, mother, and husband, while, on the other hand, that disgrace in this life, and continual transmigration into the body of a female animal, will be the certain consequence of refusal. In this state of confusion, *a few hours quickly pass, and the widow is burnt before she has had time even to think on the subject.* Should utter indifference for her husband and superior sense enable her to preserve her judgment, and to resist the arguments of those about her, it will avail her little,—the people will not be disappointed of their show; and the entire population of a village will turn out to assist in dragging her to the bank of the river and in keeping her down on the pile.

"The widow is scarcely ever a free agent at the performance of a Suttee, and therefore her opinion on the subject can be of no weight; and whether she appear glad, or sorry, stupid, composed, or distracted, is no manner of proof of her real feelings. Her relations, her attendants, and the surrounding crowd, men, women, and children, will be seen to wear one face of delight: none of the holy exultation which formerly accompanied the departure of a martyr, but all the savage merriment which, in our days, attend a boxing-match or a bull-bait. Nor can this be otherwise among those present; her relations are directly interested in her death; if she have a son, he perhaps may wish to be relieved from the expense of maintaining his mother, and the trouble of listening to her advice; if she have none, her husband's male relatives will take care that she stand not in their way, by claiming his estate for life, which is her legal right. The Brahmuns are paid for their services, and are of course interested. The crowd assemble to see a show, which, in their estimation, affords more amusement than any other public exhibition with which they are acquainted; and the sacri-

fice is completed, because the family is anxious to get rid of an incumbrance and the Brahmuns desirous of a feast and a present."*

While writing this part of the work, a letter was received from a lady who has resided in India, dated Salisbury, Dec. 3, 1827; the following extract from it appears painfully interesting.—

"At a Ghaut near Serampore I witnessed the burning of a respectable woman about thirty years of age, whom I found with *five* children, the eldest a fine boy about thirteen. As soon as she saw me, she asked me *if I were come to deliver her.* I told her I had no power to deliver her, but was come to persuade her not to burn. She shook her head and said, '*I will burn! How can I go back? However, the servant is gone to the English Magistrate,*† *at his return my fate will be decided.*' Two hours elapsed before he returned, the greater part of which I spent in conversation with her. She often turned to her children, and with affection pressed her hand upon the face of her youngest child, who could just lisp *ma, ma.* At length the servant returned with permission for her to burn. As soon as she saw him, her countenance changed, her eyes sunk into her head, the furrows deepened in her face, and when she heard her fate, resolution failed, and *nature took possession of her breast.* When the eldest son saw that his mother was so timid, he said, *he would not set fire to her head.* But her brother-in-law said, '*Now she must burn, for the boro Sahab* (the great Gentleman) *has sent her permission to burn.* He then began to anoint her, and put a little oil into her hand to pour over her children as her blessing. The eldest son refused oil, and persisted that he could not set fire to her. But neither the tears nor the screams of the boy, nor the agonizing fear of the mother, prevented her *being bound to the dead body of her husband, and pressed down with two bamboos.* If I had had any authority *merely to have said, 'you are not to burn,' all this would have been prevented.* I am sure both the people and the Brahmuns would have dispersed without a murmuring word. Many call it *a bad custom, and are quite tired of it.*"

The description of a Suttee, the motives which generally lead to it, and the objects for which the victim is sacrificed, abundantly prove that the Suttee is miscalled *suicide* or voluntary self-immolation. This idea receives confirmation from the fact that in the annual list of Suttees, in the years 1815 to 1820 inclusive, it appears sixty-two widows were burnt, most of whom were children.—

Years	17	16½	16	15	14	13	12	10	8	4
Num.	14	1	22	6	2	2	10	1	3	1

A Bengalee Newspaper, named Kowmoody, published in Calcutta, under date Aug. 1825, contains the following account;—

"Ramchundea Mitto, an inhabitant of Boydbooty, who generally lived at Calcutta, being attacked with the Cholera Morbus, was taken home by his relations, and on the night of the 29th he died, aged twenty-five years. His young and beautiful widow, *only about fourteen or fifteen years of age*. thinking herself altogether worthless in the world on the death of her husband, and *anticipating the many distresses she would have to suffer if she survived him*, absolutely burnt herself on the funeral pile."

The same under date Oct. 8, 1825, contains a similar relation.—

"We are astonished to hear that Muddon Mohun Chuckrobutty, *about fifteen years of age*, inhabitant of the twenty four Purgunnahs, (Calcutta), having lately died, his widow, *a little girl about twelve years of age!* no longer willing to inhabit this transitory world, obstinately burnt herself on the funeral pile."

The indifference frequently manifested by the unhappy mothers to their orphan children, confirms the propriety of the rather singular

* Par. Papers. Vol. i. p. 227. See Vol. v. p. 17.

† "During my residence at Serampore *many widows applied for permission to burn but were not permitted.* Those who did burn were obliged to get permission of an English Magistrate, and go out of the bounds of Serampore."

reply of a Magistrate to an official inquiry relative to the act of Suttees being voluntary or not:—"*The act, I apprehend, is always voluntary provided a being in a state of stupefaction and delusion can be said to possess the power of volition.*"* The aggregate of Suttees in India in ten years according to the official documents, is 6632, allowing two children only to each widow, here are 13,264 orphans, "left to the mercy of those who have decoyed their mothers to the fathers' funeral pile." The misery of a Hindoo orphan is thus pathetically described by a writer in a Calcutta Paper, while the author was in India.

The Infant Hindoo Mourner.

"Upon a woody bank I roam'd at eve,
Close to the Ganges gliding stilly on;
And through a glade the sun's last beams I saw,
And o'er the golden tide their radiance stream'd.
It was a sweetly pensive hour of calm;
The Myna chirp'd upon the Mango bough,
And gently coo'd the King-dove 'midst the leaves.
I heard a fretful cry of infant wail,
Tremulous, floating on the breeze of eve,
And paused to listen—when these words I caught:
"Mother! mother! Oh my dearest mother!"
I hurried onward to the sandy waste
That edg'd the water. On the ground there sat,
Near to a heap of ashes mould'ring drear,
Weary and desolate, a little child:
One tiny hand a drooping flower held fast,
Emblem most meet of that unhappy child;
The other wip'd away the scalding tears
That from her dim black orbs came trickling down,
As on that ashy heap she gaz'd intent,
Repeating still her cry of infant wail,
"Mother! mother! O my dearest mother!"
"Stranger!" exclaimed an aged peasant near,
"The story of that orphan soon is told:
Child of my child, her father paid the debt
Which awful nature claims, nor reck'd his babe,
Who deemed him sleeping in a heavy sleep:—
And wont you wake, my father? she would say,
And wont you speak, nor take me on your knee?
The Brahmun came—a garland in his hand—
And hung it round the victim mother's neck:
And then the living with the dead went forth.
The drear procession reached the fated ground
Where wood and fire as meet convenient lay:
The child her mother follow'd, laughing still,
Or skipp'd before her, sportive as a lamb;
Or grasp'd the hand whose soft caress was life.
At last the parent stoop'd and kiss'd the child,
And as she kiss'd her, down a truant tear
Trickled away, and from her quiv'ring lips,
The pangs she spoke not, breath'd upon her child.
A quick presentiment appear'd to cast
Its instant gloom upon the little one:
Unto her mother's bosom fast she clung,
And sobbed and wept. The mother soothing, plac'd
Yon flower, now faded, in her infant hand.
The frail pledge remains, but O the giver!
One last long kiss she gave, and tore away;
And then the pile she mounted by the side
Of him who press'd that bridal couch of death.
Her infant fain would follow, but we held
The little struggler, while her piercing cries
In vain reach'd her, who soon could hear no more.
"Come back, my mother! mother! mother! mother!"
The din of direful discord rose, and smoke
Ascended blackly through the sunny air,
The crowd dispers'd, but still the babe remains,
And has remained since that dread morning hour,
Weeping, and gazing for her mother there;
And nothing finds but loneliness and ashes.—
Mark the sad wildness of her young despair,
As on that ashy heap her gaze is fix'd,
With bitter tears and thick convulsive sobs;
And hark again! her cry of infant wail,
"Mother! mother! Oh my dearest mother!"

The frequent inability of the widow to escape arising from the binding of the living and the dead together, the quantity of wood laid upon them, and the administering intoxicating opiates, circumstances frequently stated in relations of this appalling rite, shew the real character of this sanguinary superstition.

My colleague, the Rev. C. Lacey, at Cuttack, describing a Suttee that occurred in that city, March 21, 1826, says;—

"The young woman was about seventeen years of age, the wife of a Bengalee Brahmun, and was accompanying her husband on a pilgrimage to Juggernaut. Having performed her perambulations round the pile of death, she laid herself by the corpse of her husband amidst the approving cries of the Bengalees present, as—'O mother Juggernaut save thee! Juggernaut save thee! O happy and blessed!' The pile seems to have been unusually high: plenty of ghee, (clarified butter), and other inflammable materials were thrown upon it, and after she had laid down, a quantity of wood, ghee, &c. was heaped upon her. The proper authorities were present. How they were allowed to lay a pile of wood upon her, and thereby render her escape impossible had she been inclined, I cannot imagine. It could not be because there was not sufficient wood to consume the bo-

* Par. Pap. Vol. 5. p. 26.

dies without it; and it was quite inconsistent with a voluntary sacrifice, because in the time of trial when infatuation is most likely to yield to the love of life, the poor victim could not act according to her own wishes, nor could any one judge of her change of resolution; as the fire must have diminished her strength, and rendered her quite unable to raise herself from under twenty or thirty seers, (forty or sixty pounds!) weight of wood.—Thus confined the poor creature was consumed to ashes. Oh! when shall we wash our hands from human blood!" (Friend of India Ap. 1826.)

The levity, apathy, and brutality which characterize these dreadful immolations, demonstrate that the practice is anything rather than a religious rite; and hence the imperious duty of the Legislature to abolish them as fanaticism and murder. A correspondent in the West of England, who resided several years in India, in a letter dated Oct. 23, 1827, thus describes what he had witnessed.

"I have seen two Suttees and might have seen many others, but the effect was too powerful for my feelings. The first was an aged female; she appeared to go through the ceremonies connected with her burning with extreme agitation. Her own daughter, about twenty years of age, applied the blazing torch to the pile, which consumed at once the bodies of her aged father and widowed mother. The circumstances of the other widow were different. She was only about *sixteen years of age*, young and beautiful. It was an awful sight! the dreadful scene had not the least appearance of a religious ceremony; it resembled an abandoned rabble assembled for the purpose of worrying to death some tame animal; or a company of fiends rejoicing over the accumulated misery of human beings. Such were the confusion and levity of the people, while the poor woman was burning before their eyes, that all humanity appeared extinct in their breasts."

A letter of the author's to a friend in England, dated Cuttack, August, 1822, contains the following extract from the Calcutta Journal.

"I accompanied some friends yesterday to a Suttee, which was to take place at Kalee Ghaut (near Calcutta), we proceeded thither in hope of being able to put a stop to the ceremony; but unhappily arrived too late. The woman had been burnt half an hour previously to our reaching the spot. We were about to return back when the brother of the infatuated victim came up to us, and with all the *sang froid* imaginable, said, *we were too late for the tamasha!* (a show, an exhibition.) Upon being asked whether he did not conceive it a heinous crime, to be accessary to the murder of his own sister, he replied, 'It is a Hindoo custom, and I am a Hindoo.' Thus this custom of barbarians, forms a sufficient plea for our permitting them uncontrolled to do these horrid murders, however contrary to the laws of civil society, and the ordinances of God."

We shall close this section by the following relation from a correspondent at Juggernaut, under date January, 1826. It is extracted from a Calcutta Paper.

"I reached the spot only in time to see the fire lighted; for the moment my boat was seen veering to the shore, the cowardly instigators hurried the woman away to the pile. In the act however of leading her to the place, I saw, from the boat, that she was hardly able to walk: two persons supported her by the arms; but before I got on shore she was laid by the side of her husband, and the fire had been applied. When she began to feel the flames I saw her attempting with her hands to throw off the wood they had piled over her, but this seemed to be a signal with the inhuman wretches that surrounded her, to heap more fuel upon her, and they shouted so loud, crying, '*Hurree bol!*' as to drown any shriek however loud she might have had strength to make. I was too much shocked to stay, but before I had receded ten paces, I was told the unfortunate victim had escaped. I returned to the scene and beheld a sight which made me shudder, and the recollection of which sends a thrill of horror through me. The unfortunate woman had succeeded in extricating herself from the wood and rolling down the pile, for the struggle and the heat had nearly deprived her of life: she lay gasping for breath; her face and body exhibiting the most revolting spectacle imaginable. The respite however was of short duration, she was almost immediately shoved back by bamboos, and logs after logs were heaped upon her. The ruffians that did this I could have swept away into the fire in the place of the woman. Hard hearted wretches that could thus stand and see the

most helpless of the human race roasted to death! It well accords with the dastardly spirit of the Bengalees. Could I command the means, I would certainly try a prosecution against those who assisted either in helping to destroy the unfortunate victim or in preventing her escape."

When, when shall the British Government see and feel the true nature of this most barbarous custom, and by one merciful act of legislation, abolish it for ever. "Thus saith the Lord, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow."

SECTION II.

Remarks on the horrid nature of the practice, and on the causes that tend to occasion its perpetration, or prevent its suppression.

The enormity of the practice of burning widows would strike even the Hindoos themselves, did not a blind attachment to the vices of their forefathers overcome every natural feeling. In all the annals of human depravity it will be difficult to discover a custom so horrible in its nature, or so destructive in its consequences both on individual and public happiness. That a practice, which would reflect a stigma on the most barbarous tribes, should have been sanctioned by men of thought and penetration, and perpetuated among a people whose mildness of disposition is proverbial, shows to what a state of degradation the mind may be reduced under the influence of superstition. This is not the case of a patriot relinquishing life to establish the freedom of his country,—it is not a martyr braving the flames to maintain the rights of conscience,—it is not a noble mind sacrificing even life itself on some occasion of exalted virtue to secure to posterity the benefit of its high example. On these occasions we feel a melancholy pleasure in applauding a voluntary resignation of life. But it is the helpless and disconsolate widow torn from her family at the very climax of her grief, and hurried to the flames amidst the shouts of an unfeeling multitude. She must stifle every feeling of compassion for the offspring of her womb, she must renounce them at a period when they stand most in need of her care; and, when weighed down with sorrow, she must take a last look on all mortal things, and enter the flames. Surely this is a case of unparalled barbarity, and tends almost beyond anything else to develope the extent of the depravity to which Hindoism owes its origin.*

Were we to hear of a nation which, on her husband's death, subjected a widow to the loss of all her property, of which she might probably have brought him part as a dower which she had enjoyed with him from the time of their union; and turned her out on the wide world to labour—to beg—to steal—or to perish, with what feelings of indignation should we regard such a law and such a nation! We should inquire, On what principle is this severity exercised on a

* Friend of India, (monthly series,) Vol. i. p. 301, 302.

helpless woman, at the moment when her heart is torn with anguish through the loss of him on whom was fixed all her hope? Were *imprisonment for life* added to this outrage; were the hapless widow deprived of her liberty, as well as of all her property, the moment death had closed the eyes of her husband; such a procedure would excite horror and indignation in every mind. What then should we say were we to hear for the first time, that in some newly discovered island, the death of the husband sealed the doom of the wife, however exemplary in her conduct; that she was, from that moment, devoted to death,—and to death in its most dreadful form—*to be burnt to ashes?* Such, however, is the case; not in some lately discovered island, but in India, famed for her literature and civilization! and, above all, in Bengal, where Europeans are chiefly found; whose ideas, the wise and candid among the natives are imbibing every day.

How then is it possible that the murder of the amiable and defenceless, attended too with such circumstances of cruelty, should have continued so long? How is it that common humanity has not overleaped every bound, and constrained superstition to desist from a course so inhuman? Among other reasons which might be mentioned, this certainly has its share, that *the whole of the horrible deed is really concealed from view.* Had the deed been constantly perpetrated in the sight of all, as was formerly the case in Smithfield;—had the helpless victim to superstition been bound to the stake in the open view of the multitude, as were formerly the victims to Romish bigotry;—had the flames been suffered to kindle on her publicly;—had the convulsions and agonies of the widow expiring in torments, often in the bloom of youth, been fully witnessed by the aged, the young, the neighbour, the near relative, humanity must have spoken out long ago; reflection must have been awakened in the public mind. At least, parents and relatives must have felt horror while anticipating the agonies which awaited a daughter or a beloved sister, the moment sickness or even accident rendered her a widow; and the voice of nature must have prevailed, and abolished the practice. But instead of this, the agonies of the dying victim *are completely concealed*, while her shrieks are drowned in the noise and shouts of the ignorant multitude and the unfeeling ministers of death. The victim being thus brought before the multitude in a state which scarcely leaves her the power of reflection, her being hastily led through certain ceremonies, and hurried to the pile by those whose countenances wear the appearance of hilarity, bound to the dead body of her husband, and covered instantly with the fuel, as well as *held down by a pressure which renders all resistance totally unavailing*, hides all the horrors of death from the sight; while the shouts of the unthinking crowd, which begin to rend the air the moment the torch is applied to the fatal pile, no less effectually conceal from the ear those agonizing shrieks, from which it is scarcely in nature to refrain at the touch of the flames. Thus completely are the multitude deluded: they think they witness all, while they witness nothing; and the unnatural jocularity, which, originating with the actors in this dreadful scene, generally pervades the whole crowd, removes every feeling of pity, and gives the whole rather the air of a

joyous festival than of a funeral scene. The agonies, and shrieks, and dying groans, of the unhappy victim, are witnessed by no one,—but by Him who is the Avenger of blood. But are these agonies the less real on this account? Is the anguish of this tremendous death the less felt? Let reason and humanity judge.

Let us consider for a moment who those are, who are doomed to undergo these agonies, unpitied, because never beheld. They are, *the most aimable part of the Hindoo race!* If there be any thing to be found of conjugal fidelity, it resides among these, since an extraordinary degree of conjugal affection, either real or ascribed, is made the lure by which these unhappy victims are betrayed to death; the enjoyment for numerous ages of the highest felicity with their deceased husbands, being held out as the bait to draw them on till they make the irrevocable declaration, that they will commit themselves to the flames. Those who are thus cruelly murdered year by year, are in most instances the most aimable, and the most virtuous, of the Hindoos.*

If we turn to the *unhappy offsprings* who are abandoned, what do we behold, but a sight of still deeper woe!—Scarcely recovered from the blow inflicted on them by the death of their father, they are hurried from their once peaceful home to the funeral pile, to witness the death of their mother! In other countries, the loss of paternal protection is, in some measure, compensated by the increased exertion of maternal solicitude: but under the influence of this system, their children are deprived of both parents in one day. A state of the deepest misery succeeds to a state of the highest happiness with such rapidity as almost to deprive them of the exercise of their mental faculties.—The family compact is destroyed with the suddenness of an earthquake. The corpse of the father is scarcely cold before their only living parent is bound to it, and consumed in their presence. But there are circumstances of still greater enormity attached to this system: the funeral pile must be lighted by the eldest son! Had this deed of darkness been consigned to some unconcerned spectator, to the Brahmun who officiates on these occasions, or even to some distant relative, this might have been some relief to the feelings; but it must be performed by the *eldest son*—the extinction of the hopes of the family is consigned to him. He accompanies his mother from his home to the banks of the Ganges, he stands by in all the agonies of grief during the performance of those tremendous rites by which she devotes herself to destruction, nor does he dare to lift an arm for her relief: he beholds his mother, endeared to him by the recollection of a thousand acts of kindness, thrown on the funeral pile like a beast of sacrifice, and *inhumanly bound* to the dead body of her husband with all those indications of brutal satisfaction which shed a tenfold horror on the scene; and surrounded by his weeping brothers and sisters, he lights up the pile which consumes the living parent with the dead. Every circumstance which can aggravate this scene of woe is here combined; nor is it possible to conceive of any thing which could add a deeper tinge of barbarity that has been omitted.

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* Friend of India, (mon. ser.) Vol. ii. p. 319—322.

If we would form an adequate idea of the effects of this system on social happiness, we must not overlook *the state of prospective misery* which each family suffers long before the painful moment of separation arrives. The family in which it is known that the mother must, through the tyranny of custom, devote herself to the flames, is subjected for years to the most afflictive anxiety. The happiness which they enjoy may be suddenly annihilated; a single day may reduce them from a state of domestic felicity to the situation of the most wretched orphans. They feel that the death of the father will be only a signal for the more horrid death of their endeared mother. The longer they are indulged with the endearments of maternal affection, the longer is the state of misery prolonged, and the keener does that stroke become of which they are held in dreadful expectation; thus that which under a milder institution is a source of joy, is here turned into an aggravation of expected wretchedness. The continuance of their social happiness is removed even from the common chance of mortality, and placed at the disposal of a merciless superstition.

The influence of this system is scarcely *less destructive to the general happiness of society*. It aggravates every natural calamity, and gives additional horror to every disease. In other countries the prevalence of an epidemic only serves to increase the energies of benevolence. In India, there are no attempts made either to stem the current of disease, or to console the afflicted and bereaved. Those of the family whom the disease has spared, are only reserved for accumulated misery—the survivors instead of receiving assistance, are cruelly deprived of that parent who could most effectually have afforded it. Every epidemic therefore assumes an aspect of tenfold horror. This dreadful practice is not suspended during a period of general distress; in vain do the wretched offspring demand the life of their mother at a time, when from the universal prevalence of disease, her's is the only hand that can minister relief to them; this superstition is inexorable as death itself. When therefore the country is afflicted, with a destructive epidemic, the numerous victims to disease, the augmented number of female immolations, the number of relatives who tremble for their sisters or their daughters, added to the number of children who stand exposed by the ravages of superstition and death, to the loss of all parental aid, form a consummation of misery, to which no other country on earth presents a parallel.*

By WHOM *this crime is perpetrated*, is worthy of the strictest inquiry. With the victims themselves it can scarcely be said to originate; for, a few days previously, they are often as void of all desire to destroy themselves, as to destroy others; and they are generally averse to the deed till their minds are completely deluded by fallacious representations. But whatever delusion may reign in their minds, without the concurrence of the husband's relatives it would be perfectly harmless. The *deed is constantly encouraged by the relatives of the husband;* those of the wife on the contrary, being generally on the side for which nature pleads; although her own son, if old enough, *is obliged to kin-*

* Friend of India, (mon. ser.) Vol. i. p. 302—304.

dle the pile prepared for his mother's destruction. It is therefore on the husband's relatives that the fate of every female is suspended, however young she may be, the moment her husband dies: and when it is considered, that they are bound to her by none of the ties of consanguinity, it will not appear strange if some one or all of the following reasons should, in general, so preponderate, as to doom to the flames one for whom they can have little or no personal feeling.

The honour of the family. This is supposed to arise in proportion to the number of unhappy victims, who can be mentioned as having devoted themselves to the flames. The husband's relatives of course claim to themselves a certain degree of credit for having surmounted feelings of affection, which they never possessed; while the number of widows in their families devoting themselves to the flames apparently from love to their husbands, gives rise to the idea that these relatives of theirs possess that excellence of character which rendered it impossible to survive their loss. That when the unhappy widow is regarded with the most perfect indifference, this alone should so weigh as to make her prefer dying to living, will create no surprise in those who are thoroughly acquainted with the native character.

The wish to get rid of a burden. A widow, though only twelve years of age, can never marry again. If her own relatives therefore be unwilling to support her, or not sufficiently opulent, she must live with the surviving relatives of the husband. And although her life is far from being an affluent one, yet a certain degree of expense is thus entailed on the family, and this possibly for a considerable number of years when she is left in the bloom of youth. The consideration of an expense therefore, though small, yet scarcely terminable within the space of their own lives, added to the vexation often arising from female relatives living together who can scarcely be expected to have any affection for each other, may possibly make them wish to rid themselves at once of a heavy burden, when it can be done in a way which, instead of being esteemed dishonourable, or any proof of the want of affection, reflects a high degree of lustre on the character of the family. At least this is a temptation which humanity would not throw in the way of a Hindoo who sets so little value on human life.

While impurity reigns among these very relatives of the husband, perhaps in such a degree as to attach to itself no kind of disgrace, *a deviation from purity of conduct* in a widow, would, in the public estimation, fix an indelible stain on the family of the deceased husband. When therefore the hazard of this dishonour, through perhaps a long life, is present to minds in which no natural affection towards a brother's widow is supposed to exist, it will excite little surprise that men who, (if report may be credited,) in some instances make no scruple of hewing in pieces a wife of their own on a mere suspicion of inconstancy, should, on the death of her husband, decide also on the death of his relict; who, should she live, instead of contributing to the support or the honour of the family, would entail on it a constant burden of expense, and might possibly involve it in disgrace, when her death, while it frees them from all expense and anxiety, tends to heighten in no inconsiderable degree its general reputation.

The death of the mother deprives her children of their natural guardian. It sometimes happens that a man who is opulent, dies and leaves children in a state of mere infancy. That their wealth should never be desired by the surviving relatives, is what no one will expect who is acquainted with the history of human nature, and much less those who are aware with what earnestness one brother among the Hindoos will labour to supplant another even while living. That, in cases of infancy, an affectionate mother, whom no cunning can elude, and no sum can bribe, should stand in the way of the surviving relatives of her husband, is only what might be naturally expected. Were she removed, there would be no one, at least with *her* feelings, to call them to account for the expenditure of the yearly income of these helpless orphans; nor possibly for the dilapidation of their whole property. The history of orphans, even in Christian countries, sufficiently shows us, how dangerous in the hands of presumptive heirs, would be such a power of removing, under a religious pretence, the mother of rich but helpless orphans. All these therefore, are so many temptations to the destruction of a widow, which through this dreadful practice, may be accomplished without the least suspicion being excited of the real views of those interested in her death.

Whatever be the delusive ideas which may apparently urge a widow to self destruction, as the hope of her enjoying numerous ages of felicity in company with her husband;—of expiating the offences of her late husband and his ancestors, and those of both her father and mother's race, with other things of this nature, there are other considerations which cannot but come still nearer to the mind of the unhappy widow. She cannot but be aware, that those who have encouraged her in these fond hopes, are either those in whose power she is completely for the rest of her life, or such as are intimate with them; for although the husband's relatives affect to dissuade her from the deed, it cannot be difficult to discern which way their minds really lean. From these then, the slightest hint, *that they wish her to die*, must operate on a widow of delicacy, like a sentence of death pronounced by a judge. With what feelings could she commit herself for life to the mercy of those who had discovered this wish, and felt in the least disappointed by her refusing to precipitate herself into the flames, particularly when the laws of the country provide her so little relief against any unkindness she might experience from them? The law itself indeed insists that, while she is never to marry again, she is also to lay aside every thing like ornament for the rest of her days, and every sign of cheerfulness; that she is never to make a full meal, and that one day in every week she is to devote wholly to fasting and grief to the end of life. In these circumstances it is almost impossible that any degree of ill-treatment which the resentment of her husband's relatives might dispose them to inflict on her, could interest her neighbours in her sufferings so as to procure her redress; particularly when the interior of a Hindoo habitation, surrounded as it often is with walls, is nearly as impervious as an ancient castle, and the female relatives are scarcely more in the public view, than were formerly the unhappy inmates of its dungeon. It is not strange, if, at the most dis-

tant intimation of this nature from those on whose kindness depends every future mitigation of her lot, a widow of sensibility and reflection should feel almost distracted, and prefer a speedy death to the unknown horrors of her future destiny.

Certain Brahmuns perform the ceremonies observed at the funeral pile on which a widow sacrifices herself. *These Brahmuns receive even from the most indigent families something on a widow's devoting herself to the flames;* and from some wealthy families as much as *two hundred rupees on these occasions.* While, then, it is the obvious interest of these Brahmuns that the wife should be induced to destroy herself when the husband dies, they have access to every family, and are acquainted with the circumstances of the various inhabitants, especially of those who are wealthy. That they should constantly recommend this dreadful practice, and prepare the female mind for the perpetration of the deed, particularly in cases where the husband is aged or sickly, is the natural effect of their caring for their own support. But these Brahmuns, as they are in some cases the family priests, are in habits of familiar acquaintance with the husband's relatives, and have much to expect from them. In what circumstances then must a helpless female stand, who has for her spiritual adviser, on the subject of her living or dying, a man who has every kindness to expect from those who are presumptive heirs to the property of her infant son, or who may merely dread her devolving on them as a burden to the end of life! Nor is it necessary to suppose that Brahmuns in forwarding the views of an infirm husband's relatives, and preparing the mind of the wife for self-destruction, should consider themselves as actual auxiliaries in the murder of a fellow-creature. They of course must be supposed to be as much habituated to the employment from which they derive their gain, as a slave-captain formerly was to kidnapping and selling slaves, of whom probably a third died in the middle passage through ill treatment and want of air. They may possibly regard the act as meritorious, rather than cruel, and admire those relatives who thus wish to raise the reputation of their families. And in this case even the distant prospect of a large remuneration, may urge them so to work on the mind of a simple, artless female, whose age is perhaps under twenty, that at the moment of the husband's death, no persuasions shall be needed to induce her to make the fatal declaration—beyond the *insiduous dissuasions* of her husband's relatives, increasing her desire by affectedly doubting her resolution, and really inflaming her vanity. Were these relatives, however, sincere in these dissuasions, they have it always in their power to prevent the act, as the preparation of the funeral pile, and all the expenses of the widow's destruction, devolve wholly on them, without the exception of the fee to the Brahmun who thus assists in the actual murder of the young, and the defenceless.

That other feelings than those of unconquerable affection for a husband, often twice or thrice their own age, or than any inspired by a steady belief in those wonderful tales of conjugal felicity to be enjoyed with him for boundless ages, influence the minds of the greater

part of these unhappy victims, might be shown by numerous instances wherein widows have been prevented by accident from burning.

A man of the writer cast, at Kon-nugur, about four miles south of Serampore, between twenty and thirty years of age, died in Dec. 1817, leaving two wives, one about thirteen years of age and the other about sixteen. Both of these, in the usual manner, expressed their wish to burn with their deceased husband. The elder of them being pregnant, was advised to delay till after her confinement, and then to burn herself with something belonging to her husband. The younger, not being prevented, was burned with the corpse of her husband. The elder solemnly engaged to burn herself a month after her confinement; till which period she was taken home by her own parents. She at first expressed such displeasure at being thus denied the opportunity of burning herself, as to beat herself severely and possibly accelerate the time of her confinement; but, at the expiration of the month after that period, when called upon to fulfil her engagement, she had considered the subject more at leisure, and being at home in the house of her own parents, she positively refused to destroy herself; nor could all the appeals made to her feelings, all the threats and reproaches poured upon her, alter her resolution in the least degree. She was in the house of her parents, and completely independent of her husband's relatives; and as every thing which could be done was of course confined to verbal exertion, she determined to remain with her parents.

As this instance is by no means a solitary one, we have little reason to conclude that the desire to destroy themselves is more firmly fixed in the minds of multitudes besides, than it was in the mind of this young woman; the apparent wish to die which is thus facticiously produced, is in most instances the mere effect of circumstances created by others; and therefore no more exculpatory of the guilt of deliberate murder, than would be a man's intoxicating another with wine, or any deleterious drug, so as to deprive him of the power of resistance, that he might secure his destruction. Such then are the circumstances in which the most aimable and virtuous among the Hindoo women are constantly placed; circumstances, by no means confined to the sacred tribe, but extended to the lowest casts among the Hindoos, as often as there is credulity enough to render the delusion sufficiently strong to become fatal.

If these circumstances be carefully weighed, it will appear that this inhuman practice has not even those pretentions to its being *a religious ceremony*, which most people have been ready to imagine. That it has *no foundation in any peculiar command given in the shastras.* Nor indeed is there in the ceremony any thing that marks it as being peculiarly of a religious nature. The woman devotes herself to no deity; her professed object is merely that of rejoining her husband in a state of happiness. It is true that certain Brahmuns officiate and obtain a sum of money on the occasion. But this is not peculiar to this ceremony; in almost every concern of life Brahmuns are called in, and there are few which are not to them a source of profit.*

* Friend of India, Vol. ii. p. 322—330.

The burning of widows is totally inexcusable because it is in direct contradiction to one of the first principles of our nature, self-preservation. God delights in the preservation of his creatures, and that which he delights in must be happy. He has shown us, by the instinct which he has implanted in us, by the structure of the various limbs of our bodies, and still more by the reason with which he has endowed us, that it is our indispensable duty to preserve, and not to destroy ourselves; a duty which we cannot violate without incurring his displeasure. So strong is the attachment to life implanted in our nature, that from time immemorial it has been proverbial: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life:"* and that this powerful principle might act universally and successfully, the God of nature has so formed and disposed of all the members of the human body, as to render them most efficient in defending us against danger. If we add to these principles of our nature, the sanctions of revelation we shall find, that of all the crimes done under the sun, that of self-murder is the most enormous.

> "Shall Nature, swerving from her earliest dictate,
> Self-preservation, fall by her own act?
> Forbid it, Heaven!"

There is in this act a violation of the laws of nature, not only on the part of the widow, but also on that of her son, who sets on fire the funeral pile. Nothing can be more evident to a reflecting mind, than that children were designed by Providence to administer to the temporal comfort of their parents. All civilized nations have agreed, that it is the duty of a child to honour its parents: hence, when a Grecian lawgiver was asked why he had specified no punishment for the murderer of a parent, replied, that he did not believe such a monster could ever exist; and hence the Romans erected a temple in honour of one who had, in an extraordinary manner, supported a parent, when dying for want in a dungeon. The writer of this very well recollects, that an English child, when he heard the relation of the Bengalees burning their own mothers, very gravely asked: "And, Sir, don't they hang them for it?"

The unnatural friends who urge the mother and son to the perpetration of the murderous deed, the Brahmuns who officiate at the inhuman rite, and the multitude who applaud the act, are all guilty of murder, according to the laws of Menu; for he states, that in any crime, the instigator, the perpetrator, and the encourager, are equally criminal. If we view things in this light, and consider the number of widows that are annually sacrificed, we shall find that there is no country in all the world so full of murderers and murder as Bengal. It has generally been considered that the burning of a widow is a simple act, which affects only the individual who suffers; but it is not so. How many urge her to it; how many assist her at it; and how many rejoice in it! This swells the enormity of the crime more than a hundred fold, because, instead of the guilt of one or two, it frequently involves the guilt of hundreds, and all these by participating of the crime, are exposing themselves to greater tortures than those of the widow, by "treasuring up to themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his work." The deed is aggravated by the

* This same proverb, though in different words, exists among the Hindoos.

cruelty which attends it. To strike a female in a civilized country, is reckoned a great disgrace to a man: but what is this, when compared to the cruelty of those, who bind with strong cords the defenceless widow to the dead body of her husband, press her down with still stronger bamboos, lest she should make her escape, put the torch which is to kindle the consuming fire into the hand of her son, and when the smoke and flames ascend to Heaven, drown the shrieks of the dying by loud vociferations, exult as though they had achieved some great exploit, and return home as though they had been to a feast and not a funeral? We can conceive of no murder so aggravated as this. To leave a female unprotected in the hour of danger or distress, is considered a greater act of cruelty than that of destroying a public foe; but because she is unprotected, and because her husband has made no provision for her, to destroy her in the most cruel manner, is an act of barbarity to which the annals of time can furnish no parallel.*

Our last inquiry regards what the shastras have said concerning the moral influence of this practice. They have attempted to extol it very highly in reference to the persons immediately concerned, and have asserted, that the merit of the deed is so great, that its influence will extend to the individuals and their ancestors for an almost indefinite period. The very words, however, which they have used to celebrate this conduct, afford to us the plainest proofs of its demoralizing effects.

While the consequences which result from this system to the bereaved families are passed over in silence, those which result to society in general are calculated with no degree of precision. Ungira affirms that this deed will expiate any crime.

"If the man has been the murderer of a Brahmun, or ungrateful, or the murderer of his friend, the woman purifies him."

Menu has declared, that the killing of a Brahmun is an unpardonable sin, for which there is no expiation. But, passing by these gross contradictions, we would solicit the attention of the reader only to the moral tendency of these words. We should not have supposed that, a people so mild and so averse to murder, as the Hindoos, would have trifled so strangely with the subject, as to suppose that it could be atoned for by the burning of a widow. If one murder can thus expiate another, then we may conclude that any vice will produce its opposite virtue. It is happy for this country, that the general disposition of the natives prevents them from turning such ideas to the mischievous purposes of which they are capable. We are happy to find ingratitude, ranked among the vices of extraordinary magnitude, and placed by the side of the unpardonable sin, the killing of a Brahmun. We had heard it asserted by some, that gratitude was a thing so little known among the natives of Bengal, that they had not a word to express such an idea. This is a mistake; yet what must we think of the extent to which ingratitude prevails, when it is maintained not to be ungrateful for a son to set fire to his own mother? And how are we to account for the extent of this bad principle, but by attributing it to that spurious morality which teaches that any crime may be expiated by the murder of an innocent and helpless widow?

* Asiatic Observer, (Jan. 1824,) No. v. p. 21—24

From the whole we learn these important truths:—That the shastras do not require or command a widow to burn:—that in recommending it they have not taken into consideration whether it is murderous or not, but have expressed themselves so unguardedly as to leave the subject fairly open, on their own grounds, to this objection; that in case the woman does not choose to burn, they prescribe methods by which she may obtain future bliss, without the pain of burning:—that should the widow burn, upon the supposition that she is a self-murderer, they involve also, in the charge of murder, the son and the Brahmuns that assist her:—that they do not, in the least degree countenance the cruelties which are now practised, in binding the widow to the dead body, and holding her down with bamboos:—that the rewards, though apparently great, and on that account imposing, are little more than are attainable by offering *a single flower or plantain:* —that since, according to the shastras, the Brahmuns and their families do not go to hell when they die, there cannot be the least need of the widow's suffering to deliver them: and that the considerations on which this practice is recommended are such as tend to destroy all morality, and open the door to the commission of the most enormous crimes.*

This practice is not by any means prevalent in other parts of Hindostan in the degree in which it now exists in Bengal. Of this the following extract of a letter contains a proof. "People in Bengal are not generally aware how unfrequent is this most barbarous custom in the upper provinces of Hindostan. In eight years, mostly spent in this quarter, no Suttee has come to my knowledge; and my moonshee, a man about forty-five, informs me that he never saw but one, and that was at Lucknow; the victim, a widow of a Cashmerian pundit. There can be no doubt but a law of prevention would neither create surprise nor resistance in these provinces, and were it enacted for them only, it would lead to its being established hereafter in Bengal."

This cruel practice has in it more of the nature of a civil, than a religious ceremony. It is a well-known fact, that in Bengal, at the present time, the Hindoos are far less tenacious of their religious tenets and ceremonies than in almost any other part of India; that they are far less careful respecting caste, and that the Brahmuns in numerous instances are guilty of actions which, according to the strictness of the law respecting caste, would degrade them completely. The number of widows who are thus put to death scarcely at all decreases. It seems indeed to increase in the vicinity of the metropolis, where the greatest laxness is to be witnessed relative to things wholly religious. How can we account for this vast disparity in the number of these murders perpetrated in Hindostan, and in the lower parts of Bengal, without having recource to other motives than those of a religious nature? But the moment we recur to *other* reasons for the continuation of this murderous custom, they present themselves on every side. The want of feeling manifested by the natives to their own countrymen when in danger of death by accident, as in a storm, or even when actually drowning, is known to most Europeans. The venality with which they are charged relative to oaths, is not without foundation; yet these must often involve life itself, as well as character and property.

* Asiatic Observer, (April, 1824), No. vi. p. 111—120.

Such is the real state of the case respecting the burning of widows, which so many have been ready to tolerate under the idea of its being a most sacred religious ceremony, with which it would be sacrilege to interfere. With almost as much justice might the Slave Trade have been regarded with veneration, as a sacred relict of antiquity handed down from the earliest ages;—or the practice of killing all prisoners taken in war;—or that of sacrificing hecatombs of men at the funeral of a favourite chief;—or the conduct of certain banditti in India, who, (from time immemorial no doubt) are said to seize men and immolate them at the shrine of their imagined deity. *It has scarcely enough of religious ceremony connected with it to varnish it over with the name of religion.* It is generally accompanied with the most unfeeling jocularity. Instead of its being a deed of mere superstition, there is reason to fear that it is too often the offspring of the meanest self-interest. *It is not binding on all.* It falls only on one sex, while the deed is perpetrated by the other, whom it can never reach; and of that sex it affects only one description of persons, and with these it is professedly optional: were it a religious ceremony however, it would be binding on all. This class,—are left as fully in the power of relatives who do not *profess* any feeling for them, as the kid when in the paw of the tiger. It is never equally the interest of the husband's relatives that the widow should live, as that she should be burnt to death. With the former there is connected in *every case*, a certain loss of reputation, and the expenses of maintaining a person to the end of life in whose welfare they feel no kind of interest; with the latter, the full removal of this burden, and a high degree of reputation to their families.

So much do these circumstances affect the case, that were second marriages esteemed honourable, and the children born of them permitted to inherit equally with those of a first marriage, a practice sanctioned not merely by the laws of all Christian nations, but even those of Greece and Rome notwithstanding their idolatry, many think, that this alone would gradually extinguish the practice. But is it right, that in a country so richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, the mere question of interest, the loss of a few rupees annually, should be suffered to doom the most amiable, of our Hindoo subjects, almost daily to the most cruel death in nature; merely because their being uninformed in mind renders them liable to the grossest deceptions, and their being unable to support themselves, renders them dependent? We would intreat all to remember, that *murder concealed from public view is murder still;* and, that our not actually witnessing the dreadful deed, when we are certain that it is committed, will do little towards exonerating us from guilt.*

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* Friend of India, (mon. ser.) Vol. ii. p. 330—332.

SECTION III.

The rite of Suttee not enjoined by the most authoritative of the Hindoo Legislators, and opposed to their views of eminent virtue. Force forbidden by the shastras, yet frequently employed.

A learned native, named Ram Mohun Roy, well known by his luminous examination of the Hindoo Theology and Philosophy, in 1818 printed and widely circulated a tract in the Bengalee language, the object of which is to dissuade his countrymen from the practice of this horrid rite; he likewise published a translation of the tract in English. It is in the form of a dialogue between an advocate and an opponent of the system. The advocate cites various passages from Ungira, Vyas, Hareet, and the Rig-ved, which enjoin or applaud the practice of self-immolation. Against these passages the opponent produces an extract from Menu, the great Hindoo legislator, of whom the Veda himself says, that "Whatever Menu has said is wholesome;" which Vrihuspute corroborates by adding, "Whatever is contrary to the law of Menu is not commendable." The extract is as follows: "Let a widow emaciate her body, by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruits, but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man. Let her continue till death, forgiving all injuries, performing harsh duties, avoiding every sensual pleasure, and cheerfully practising the incomparable rules of virtue which have been followed by such women as were devoted to one husband."

From this passage the opponent infers, that as Menu directs the widow, after the death of her husband, to pass her whole life as an ascetic, he intended she should *remain alive* for this purpose; and hence that this direction of Menu is totally opposed to the directions of the other sages; and that their authority must bend to that of this great legislator. The opponent then adduces, as his next argument, the disesteem in which the generality of the Hindoo sages regard works of merit or demerit, or more properly, works done with the interested motive of gaining future happiness thereby; and to show that these are not necessary to the attainment of what the Hindoos esteem the highest state of felicity, absorption in Brumhu, he quotes the following passage from the Veda: "By living in the practice of regular and occasional duties, the mind may be purified. Thereafter by hearing, reflecting, and constantly meditating on the Supreme Being, absorption in Brumhu may be attained. Therefore, from a desire during life of future fruition, life ought not to be destroyed." The immolation of the widow being urged on her wholly on interested motives, that of enjoying numerous ages of happiness with her deceased husband as its fruit, is therefore opposed to that system, which, disregarding all actions connected with bodily enjoyment, magnifies the value of divine knowledge as leading to absorption in Brumhu.

The advocate for the practice replies; that the later authorities, in directing the woman to burn herself, do not contradict this law of Menu; and supports this idea by saying that Menu directs the performance of Sundhya or evening worship, but is silent as to worshipping Huri, by calling aloud on his name; while Vyas prescribes calling on the name of Huri, and adds that the words of Vyas do not contradict those of Menu. He therefore infers, that when Vishnoo and others command the widow to fol-

low her husband through the flame, they do not contradict the command of Menu. This the opponent meets with the utmost ease by showing that there is no analogy in the cases, the performance of Sundhya not preventing any one invoking the name of Huri during another part of the day, while a woman burning herself with her husband will infallibly prevent her living the life of an ascetic; and completely fixes the charge of contradicting the immutable laws of Menu on those who have prescribed this practice, by quoting Ungira as declaring that there is no other way known for a virtuous woman except her ascending the funeral pile of her husband; and Hareet as denouncing her refusal as a crime by declaring, that as long as a woman *shall not* burn herself alive after the death of her husband, she shall be subject to transmigration in a female form. The advocate for the practice endeavours to justify it further by quoting the Rig-ved and Hareet, as commending it. This the opponent confutes by various passages esteemed sacred by the Hindoos, which reprobate men performing religious rites merely from interested motives, and among the rest the following from the Bhagvut-Geet, which he terms the essence of all the Smritees, Poorans, and Itahases: "All those ignorant persons who attach themselves to the words of the Vedas that convey promises of fruition, consider those falsely alluring passages as leading to real happiness, and say that besides them there is no other reality. Agitated in their minds by these desires, they believe the abodes of the celestial gods to be the chief object; and they devote themselves to those texts which treat of ceremonies and their fruits, and entice by promises of enjoyment. Such people can have no real confidence in the Supreme Being." These passages the advocate at length acknowledges to be indeed consistent with the Vedas, with Menu, and with the Bhagvut-Geet, adding however: "But from this I fear that the passages of the Vedas and other shastras, that prescribe Concremation and Postcremation as the means of attaining heavenly enjoyments, must be considered as *only means to deceive*." This the opponent of the practice very dextrously obviates, by urging that these could intend no deception: they only set before mankind *two* methods of obtaining happiness, the one excellent, the other mean and unworthy for those who are enveloped in desire, passion, and cupidity, who, if they had no shastras holding out rewards, would reject all shastras, and follow their own inclinations like an elephant unguided by the hook. To prevent this the shastra prescribes various ceremonies, among which is one for procuring the destruction of an enemy! and of course this for destroying widows.

Unable to urge any thing better, its advocate insists, that after all, a practice handed down to them by Hareet and others ought not to be set aside. This his opponent meets not only by saying that this argument is inconsistent with justice, but by urging the violation of their own rule in the very act of burning. The direction is, that "the widow shall voluntarily quit life ascending *the flaming pile* of her husband." Now, says he, "You first bind down the widow along with the corpse of her husband, and then heap over her such a quantity of wood that she cannot rise. At the time too of setting fire to the pile, you press her down with large bamboos. In what passage of Hareet or the rest do you find authority for thus binding the woman according to your

practice? This is in fact deliberate female murder." The advocate urges as an excuse for this horrid practice, that were the woman to shrink back terrified with the flames, after having recited the usual incantations, it would be sinful, and be considered disgraceful by others. The sin his opponent treats with due contempt, by saying that according to themselves it could be expiated by bestowing the value of *three kahuns of cowries, or twelve annas*;* and justly reprobates the idea of esteeming the prevention of murder a disgrace. The advocate for the practice, driven to his last resort, defends the binding down of the afflicted widow merely on the ground of its being a custom observed throughout Hindostan. This his opponent first denies, and then justly reprobates, even were it thus universal.

In the burning of widows as practised at present in some parts of Hindostan, however voluntary the widow may have been in her determination, force is employed in the act of immolation. After she has circumambulated and ascended the pile several natives leap on it, and, pressing her down on the wood, bind her with two or three ropes to the corpse of her husband, and instantly throw over the two bodies, thus bound to each other, several large bamboos, which being firmly fixed to the ground on both sides of the pile, prevent the possibility of her extricating herself when the flames reach her. Logs of wood are also thrown on the pile, which is then in flames in an instant: for to such a pitch of cruel ingenuity have the Brahmuns, accustomed to officiate on these occasions, attained by frequent use, that the whole of this process is realized almost with the rapidity of thought. Scarcely a single moment is left to the spectator to contemplate the scene before the unhappy woman is writhing in the agonies of death. The author of the pamphlet under review states, that this practice has been recently introduced, and that it is confined almost exclusively to Bengal. This information, we have reason to believe, is perfectly correct. A few months ago, in one of the largest cities in Hindostan, a woman who had devoted herself to death, and had even ascended the funeral pile, leaped out of the flames, and plunged herself into the river. Her relatives seized on her, and dragged her back to the pile; but she uttered the loudest cries, calling upon the officers of justice who attended to save her from a forcible death. They instantly interposed their authority, and on finding that she steadfastly resisted the wishes of her relatives, ordered her to return home; and though this scene occurred in a large City highly bigoted to Hindoism, and in the presence of thousands of spectators, there was not the least attempt made to rescue her from the protection of the officers of Government.

The use of force by means of bamboos is, we believe, universal through Bengal; it is intended to prevent the possibility of the widow's escape from the flames, as such an act would be thought to reflect indelible disgrace on the family. The number of widows burnt in Bengal, however, exceeds, by nearly three times, the number burnt in all the other provinces of Hindostan. Thus in three cases out of four that force is used which renders all resistance on the part

* That is three fourths of a rupee.

of the unhappy sufferer vain. This is totally contrary to the rules even of those shastras which command the practice; they strictly enjoin that the sacrifice shall be perfectly voluntary in every stage of its progress. Constraint indeed is forbidden by the very nature of the sacrifice. It is called a Suttee, because a woman devotes herself to the flames to prove that she has continued immovably faithful to her husband. Not only therefore must the intention be voluntary, but to evince this, the act of immolation must not include the most distant idea of constraint.

The Supreme Government has now for several years issued various regulations to the Magistrates, strictly forbidding the immolation of widows in cases where the Hindoo shastras have forbidden it; and surely if "a vigour beyond the laws," be ever tolerated, it should not be when the law has originated in the most savage barbarity, and is held doubtful by the wisest and most virtuous among the Hindoos themselves—when its operation is levelled, not against the ruffian who eludes justice, but against the most amiable and helpless part of our Indian fellow subjects. Under the influence of the regulations, some females of tender age have been rescued from destruction, yet not a single murmur has been heard. Were the use of bamboos forbidden we feel assured that the tranquility of the country would not be disturbed for a single moment. And if the apprehension that the widow, unable to ascend the *burning* pile, might possibly reflect disgrace on the family by a change of mind, should in any case induce the relatives to dissuade a female from incurring the risk, the advantage would be entirely on the side of humanity and justice. Considering the British Government to be the greatest temporal blessing which Providence has conferred on this country, we cannot give up the hope that, ultimately, Government will abolish entirely a custom which involves the murder of the helpless and the innocent, almost without the shadow of support from the Hindoo superstition itself.*

SECTION IV.

Review of a Pamphlet on the burning of Hindoo Widows, written in Bengalee by a Pundit.

This work, small as it is, is in a high degree interesting, merely from the circumstances in which it appears, and the subject it embraces. It is the product of a native press, and is among the first attempts yet made, for these three thousand years, to appeal to the public respecting the propriety of practices received as sacred by the Hindoos, from their being sanctioned by antiquity. It forms one of the fruits which have arisen from the introduction of printing into India; and is the result of that wise and benign sway exercised by Bri-

* Friend of India. Vol. i. p. 305—311.

tain over her possessions in the East. Uuder the Mousulman or Hindoo Governments, nothing of this kind could have appeared, as no one durst venture publicly to question the propriety of any practice which professed to derive its sanction from the Koran, or the Hindoo shastras, its advocates would not have found it necessary to bring any discussion respecting it before the public, much less to submit those arguments on which it might rest for support to public decision.

Such however have been the oblique effects of that diffusion of light which the residence of Europeans has produced in India, that the natives themselves begin to feel the necessity of recurring to reason as the test of their conduct in things both civil and religious. They cannot but perceive that this is the line of conduct observed by their rulers. It was impossible that this should long be altogether without effect on the minds of the natives: they have already begun, in a certain degree, to think for themselves; and the consequence is, that long prescription, in cases decidedly opposed to righteousness, begins in some measure to lose its weight; and while the advocates of humanity lay before their countrymen their reasons for doubting the propriety of usages evidently contrary to its dictates, the supporters of them are constrained to meet their opponents in the public area, and submit to the judgment of the spectators the grounds on which they solicit their continued suffrages.

The occasion of this pamphlet was as follows: for some time past the burning of such a number of widows annually, has greatly affected the minds of many among the British Inhabitants of the Presidency of Calcutta, who have been constrained to witness these melancholy scenes. Previously to the Marquis Wellesley's departure in 1806, Dr. Carey, through the Rev. Dr. Buchanan, submitted to Government three memorials. The first of these included the practice of exposing infants, which existed chiefly in the north of Bengal; and that of persons devoting themselves voluntarily to death at Saugur Island and in certain other places. The two last practices were abolished by an order of Government; but the burning of widows has been suffered to continue to the present day.

In the course of the year 1818 Ram Mohun Roy addressed his countrymen on the subject, in a well written pamphlet, noticed in the former section, in which he insists that the practice has in reality *no foundation in the Hindoo shastras.* To this phamphlet, the work under consideration is an answer drawn up by some of the pundits in Calcutta. It is sent forth without a name and without a title page; but from private information, as well as from the pamphlet itself, we find that it is the work of men by no means deficient in learning. It is written in the form of a dialogue between an Advocate for the system of burning widows, under the term "Bidhaok," and an Opponent, termed "Nishedhok." In the work every authority supposed to countenance the inhuman custom, and every scrap of Sunscrit found on its side among Hindoo writers, are given in the original text, and translated into Bengalee. It is valuable from its containing every thing found in the Hindoo shastras in favour of this practice, and if all this fall short of an absolute and indispensable injunction, the prac-

tice will be found to be as illegal according to the Hindoo shastras, as it is inhuman in itself. This work is evidently intended for the perusal of Europeans also; as an English translation is prefixed. In our extracts from this phamphlet we prefer quoting its own language for the sake of doing it every degree of justice, and shall content ourselves with merely adding a sentence or a word where the translation is not sufficiently clear. The work commences by the Advocate urging the claims of his cause in the following sweeping declaration.

"It is ordained by (the) Srutee, Smrtee, Pooranas, and other sacred books, that the women, on the death of their husbands, should die in Shuhu-murun, that is to burn (should burn) themselves alive with the corpse of their respective husbands; and, that in want of the corpse, should die in Unoo-murun, that is to burn, (should burn) with something belonging to their husbands: which usages the great sages during all the four ages of the world, viz. Suttwa, Treta, Dwapur, and Kulee, have regularly maintained in their codes. It is very improper that you throw obstacles to prevent such a matter." To this the Opponent replies; "You say this is improper for want of knowledge of the shastras or law, but when you know the shastra, you will no more say so."

This forms the signal for the Advocate to pour forth on the Opponent, every sentence and scrap of Sunscrit in support of the practice, which he had been able to collect. The chief of these authorities is that of *Ungeera*, who, however does little more than *recommend* the practice. We give his opinion in the Advocate's translation:—"The woman that mounts the funeral pile of her deceased husband, equals herself to Uroondhootee the wife of Vushisht'ha, and enjoys bliss in heaven with her own husband. She that accompanies her husband to the other world—dwells in heaven for three and a half cootee years, (thirty-five millions),* which is equal to the number of hairs on a human body, and with her own power taking her husband up, in the same manner as a snake-catcher would have taken a snake out of its hole, remains with him in diversion. She that goes with her husband to the other world, purifies three generations, that is, the generations of her mother's side, father's side, and husband's side; and so, she being reckoned the purest and best in fame among women, becomes too dear to her husband, and continues to divert herself with him for a period equal to the reign of fourteen Indras; and, although the husband be guilty of slaying a Brahmun or friend, or be ungrateful of the past deeds, yet the said woman is capable of purifying him from all these sins. Hence," says the Advocate, "Ungeera affirms, that after the demise of a husband, there can be no other duty for a chaste wife than to destroy herself in the fire."

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* If we form our ideas of the merit of a widow's burning from the rewards attached to it, we shall find that it is not so very meritorious as it is generally represented; for nearly the same reward is offered to the person who presents only a single plantain to Seeb.—"He who offers a single ripe plantain to Seeb, shall, with his relations, be exalted to Heaven for thirty millions of years." The only difference in the reward of the person who offers a plantain, and of her who offers her life, is five million years. If happiness can be thus secured, the sacrifice of life to obtain it can be considered as nothing less than insanity. Asiatic Obs. (Ap. 1824.)

Purasura is then quoted as confirming part of this recommendation, by saying;—"The woman that goes with her husband to the other world, dwells in heaven for three and half cootee years which is equal to the number of hairs on a human body." *Hareeta* is, after this, introduced as enjoining it by consequence in the following observation: "After the death of a husband, until his wife does not burn herself in the fire, she cannot get rid of her feminine body." This sentence is to be noticed for the inference which will be found drawn from it in the latter part of the work. The *Muhabharut* is then adduced as declaring that a woman burning herself on her husband's funeral pile, atones for her having been a scold or even unfaithful through life, and secures her accompanying him in the other world, maugre all unwillingness on his part: and this although she burn herself from "amours, wrath, fear, or affection." The highest countenance given to the practice therefore, by their own writers, (and these appear but four, Ungeera, Purasura, Hareeta, and Vyas), *amounts only to a recommendation of it* from certain advantages the widow is deluded with the hope of obtaining; that is, the enjoyment of happiness with her husband—by no means to eternity, but for as many years as there are hairs on the human body; *after which she must descend to the earth again, and undergo all that vicissitudes of birth which, in the opinion of the Hindoos, constitutes future punishment.*

The Advocate for this practice then goes on to notice another authority, that of *Vishnoo-Risee*, who, however, leaves burning *perfectly optional*, in the following language:—"After the demise of a husband, his wife shall either devote herself to Brumhachurya, (a life of austerity,) or mount the funeral pile of her husband." To do away the force of this option, the Advocate adds, that the choice of a life of austerity would involve in it eight faults or crimes, but which he has not mentioned that the reader might judge of their nature, and that even this option is therefore to be rejected. He then goes on to state the authority for Unoo-murun, or a woman's burning herself after her husband's death with some article belonging to him! a practice by no means uncommon at the present day. For this he adduces the authority of *only a solitary writer* the author of the Mutsya-Pooran, in these words:—"In case of the demise of a husband in a distant country, the chaste wife should purify her person by bathing, and then, taking her husband's shoes or another thing, enter into a burning pile to be prepared on purpose." This he justifies by saying, that the Rigveda declares such women not to be guilty of self-murder; which plainly indicates, that if this be self-murder, in the opinion of the Hindoos themselves, it would be condemned. Such then is the whole of the countenance this Advocate has been able to adduce from the Hindoo writers themselves; and this, one quotation from *Oosuna* condemns in the gross,—it is the voice of nature involuntarily speaking:—"*Let not Brahmunees, or wives of Brahmuns, suffer death by entering into a separate pile; but for the rest of the women, this law is most preferable.*" When it is considered that every authority adduced in favour of this practice is that of Brahmuns, for no Shoodra has ever yet be-

come authoritative as a man of learning, this decides the matter at once. If it be meritorious thus to ascend the separate funeral pile, why deny this privilege to the daughters of Brahmuns? *Nature spoke in the breast of this writer.* He was a Brahmun, and he shuddered at the idea of the immolation of his daughter, for the sake of a worthless husband, who might perhaps have treated her with neglect and cruelty all his life. The Brahmuns of the present day, consign them to the flames precisely as they do others: a plain proof, *that a regard for the authority of their own shastras has little to do in continuing this practice.*

But to these quotations from Ungeera, Hareeta, and Purasura, the Advocates for this practice are well aware, are opposed authorities of far greater weight, and such as completely nullify them and forbid this inhuman custom. The Opponent is now made to quote these, therefore, that the Advocate for the burning system may obtain an opportunity of invalidating them. He first adduces the famous legislator *Menu*, whose authority is paramount to that of every succeeding writer, as prescribing an opposite course for widows in the following language:—"Listen to the law which Menu has prescribed for the husbandless woman. 'After the death of husbands their wives should make themselves lean, by living upon sweet flowers, roots, and fruits; never mind the name of a man, and until the time of their respective death with resignation and restriction continue to observe the laws prescribed for Ekputnees (those who have married but one husband); that is, they should, with the desire of obtaining the state of chaste women, devote themselves to the law prescribed for Brumhachurya. As thousands of young Brahmuns who, before their arriving at full age, devoted themselves to Brumhachurya and begot no children have gone to Surga or Heaven, the chaste women in like manner who, after their husband's death, devote themselves to the law of Brumhachurya, may obtain bliss in heaven though issueless.' Hence, says the Opponent, Menu has ordained, that women, after their husband's death, should spend the remaining part of their lives in Brumhachurya. This decision of Menu the Opponent confirms by adducing the following corroborative declaration from one of the Vedas, 'Know that whatever Menu pronounced, is a medicine for the soul;' and another from *Vrihusputee*, 'A Sreeti inconsistent with that of Menu is not praiseworthy.'"

To remove this decision of Menu, which *completely forbids the practice*, is the grand object of this work, and for the sake of this alone it is quoted. This the Advocate, knowing that no commentator can erect himself into a law-giver, and abolish the law itself, first attempts by affirming, that it is only the Smritee *inconsistent* with Menu which is unworthy of regard; but as a woman can live a life of abstinence and chastity after burning herself, these two of course are not inconsistent! Feeling ashamed of this argument, he quits it, and adducing the following sentence from *Juyminee*, "where there arises an inconsistency among laws, that maintained by many is preferable," attempts to infer, that the *recommendation* of Ungeera, Purasura, and Hareeta, ought to outweigh *the law itself*, enacted by Menu. Deserting this argument as untenable, he quotes a passage from the Rig-veda, recommending the practice of burning, and

affirms that the law of Menu on the subject means nothing more than that of a woman who may by any accident be *prevented* from burning herself with her husband, or afterwards with one of his shoes, ought to devote herself to a life of austerity. The author of this pamphlet, while he professes to set the authority of the Rig-veda against that of the great Hindoo legislator, is however well aware that *the Vedas contradict each other on this very point.* That he may in some way or other obviate this discrepancy, so fatal to his argument, he now introduces the Opponent as quoting a well known passage from the Veda which forbids the burning of widows in the following words:—"As by means of living still, the duties usual and occasional can be performed to purify the mind, and as by hearing of (and) fixing our mind and devoting our soul to Brumhu or the Supreme Spirit, we can attain it (absorption in Brumhu,) no woman should therefore spend her life, that is, suffer death in hopes of attaining Surga or bliss in heaven." From this the Opponent infers that, as a widow is forbidden to throw away her life with the hope of obtaining connubial bliss for a limited time in heaven, the authority of those who recommend a widow's burning herself with this hope, is completely nullified.

This is the doctrine which it is the object of the writer of this pamphlet to overthrow. After the Opponent has thus stated it, the advocate for the burning system urges first, that to infer from the authority of Menu and the Veda, that a woman, instead of burning herself, ought to embrace a life of abstinence and chastity, would strip the writings of those who recommend her burning herself of all authority! an overwhelming argument truly. He then adduces a sentence from Menu, to shew that when one Smirti appears to have one meaning, and another a different one, *both are to be held as law!* The plain inference from this would be, that a widow ought to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pile, and to embrace a life of austerity too! To confirm this exposition, and to preserve the authority of those, who in their zeal for burning, have contradicted their own celebrated lawgiver, the Advocate quotes the following contradictory sentence by way of illustration: "In the Otirata, or the oblations of clarified butter, offered to the consecrated fire, the Shorassee* is to be taken; and in the Otiratra the Shorassee is *not* to be taken." The just meaning of which, contrary Sutras, says he, is, that if in this sacrifice the Shorassee be taken or received, the sacrifice is superlatively meritorious; but if it be not, the deed is still complete and advantageous. From this illustration the writer, in the person of the Advocate, infers, that if a widow wishes to attain connubial bliss in Heaven, she may burn herself; but if she wishes final beatitude, she may embrace a life of self-denial; and then adds triumphantly, "See therefore that a woman's burning herself for the sake of connubial bliss in Heaven has no way been forbidden." The whole of this, only goes to say, that even by these authorities, if a widow desires final beatitude she is not commanded to burn herself; and that according to them, all *is merely matter of option.* Thus the whole hitherto advanced by the Advocate

* Shorassee, the pot containing the clarified butter and other ingredients.

SERFOJI'S SARASWATI

for the burning system is, that by their great legislator it is not commanded but forbidden; and by those commentators who abrogate the law they pretend to explain, it is merely *recommended*, and left perfectly optional. But a further examination of the subject will show, that this recommendation, while viewed by themselves as degrading in the highest degree, is subversive of the whole system of Hindoism. To illustrate this part of the subject, it will be necessary to recur to the creed of the Hindoos relative to future happiness.

The Hindoos throughout India believe the human soul to form an integral part of Brumhu, or the Deity, and hence esteem the summit of future bliss to consist in what they deem final beatitude, or absorption into Brumhu. To the attainment of this, all their endeavours are directed; for the sake of it the most tremendous austerities are performed; and nothing beyond this is supposed to be within the wish of man. There are, according to their ideas, many heavens or inferior stages of bliss, to be obtained by certain meritorious deeds. None of these, however, is considered lasting; but the duration of every state of bliss is, according to them, proportioned to the merit of the deed of which it is esteemed the reward. After this period is expired, the person is expected to be born on earth again, and to undergo numerous vicissitudes of births till his mind is so purified as to obtain final absorption into the Deity. Their state of misery indeed is esteemed no more lasting than that of happiness; but every kind of suffering therein, is supposed to be proportioned in duration to the demerits of the sufferers; after which they also are said to be born again on the earth, and there to undergo all the vicissitudes of transmigration till they become sufficiently pure to obtain absorption into the Deity. Hence a woman who may burn herself for the sake of living with her husband in heaven for a certain period, on its expiration descends to the earth, and, according to the Hindoos, she may be found in Hell in the course of years. For this reason the wise and learned among them treat these evanescent states of bliss with contempt, and contend that nothing is worthy of pursuit but final beatitude or absorption. Hence, a woman's burning herself to obtain connubial bliss in heaven for a certain period, is deemed by them unspeakably inferior to her obtaining final beatitude through a life of abstinence and chastity. The recommendation in which the Advocate triumphs, even upon his own principles, ought to have been precisely the reverse of what he has made it, since that line of conduct ought to be recommended which is supposed to secure the *highest happiness*.

The Opponent is represented as approving of this decision; but for the sake of its being answered, he is made to urge another objection in the following words: "As in various shastras contempt has been poured on actions done from cupidity, a woman's burning herself from such motives is by no means proper." He then quotes the *Kuthopunishut*, as declaring, that while the pursuit of the system of sacred Wisdom is considered safe, he who pursues the other system which includes a widow's burning herself, degrades his own nature. This he further coroborates by a long quotation from the *Bhaguvut Geet*, which charges such as follow the system with acting only from cupidity and ambition. The whole of this system, therefore, is, by their best writers, regarded as having nothing in it of the nature of virtue; but as being in reality the indulgence of cupidity, ambi-

tion, and malice. Among these the Opponent properly classes a widow's burning herself with her husband's corpse, with the view of enjoying connubial bliss in heaven; and intimates, that if actions of this kind are not evil, they are at least unnecessary. This fires the Advocate, who, to overwhelm his adversary at once exclaims, "Listen then to Srutee, 'A man wishing heaven for himself shall perform Ushwameda-jauga,' (the sacrifice of a horse); and again, 'a man wishing heaven for himself, shall perform Jotisuma-jauga.' These and other Srutees, are they to lose their *spirits?* (that is, to have no effect?) Say what is your answer." The Opponent humbly bows beneath the weight of this rebuke, and acknowledges that the Srutees which commend selfish actions are not useless, but intended for those who, previously filled with "amours, wrath, and covetousness," are not inclined to enter disinterestedly into the service of the Supreme God; and that without these Srutees enjoining them thus to sacrifice from cupidity or malice, they, would be like an elephant without his guide. To prevent this, says he, certains jaugas were ordained to be performed by them; as *sena-jauga*, by one wishing the death of his enemy; *pootrosti-jauga*, by one longing for a son; and *jotistuma-jauga*, by one wishing bliss in heaven. This appeases the Advocate, who having thus secured the validity of these commands for performing devotional acts from cupidity, ambition, or malice, admits, that while these deeds are good, still actions from superior motives are somewhat more praiseworthy. This concession, is made with the view of enabling the Opponent to bring out the last objection he has left, that the Advocate may demolish it like a man of straw. This is couched in the following words: "If you maintain that the disinterested actions are better than those self-interested, why do you then, instead of permitting husbandless women to adopt the law of Brumhachura, which gives final beatitude, endeavour to preserve the system of self-interested actions of Shuhu-murun and Onoo-murun, which produce (merely) bliss in heaven?"

This argument, which the Advocate was aware must appear on the face of the subject, and must weigh in favour of a life of abstinence and chastity in preference to burning, as much as eternal beatitude is to be preferred to a continual vicissitude of misery, he now proceeds to obviate. This he first attempts by urging that a woman in embracing a life of chastity would still do it with a view to final beatitude, and therefore from self-interested motives: hence as burning herself would also rescue her husband from the pit he might be driven into for slaying a Brahmun, or friend, or being ungrateful, together with the three generations before mentioned, and enable the woman to "get herself rid of her feminine sex," he esteems it far more desirable that she should burn.

To this conclusive argument the Opponent replies; "Now your sayings are consonant with the shastras." Still, however, he suggests the *probability* of women's attaining the state of final beatitude, were they, after the death of their husbands, "to be disciplined in sacred wisdom, which, by burning themselves, they can never attain." To this the Advocate has an unanswerable argument ready, that all instruction would be totally vain; for, says he, "it would be attended with no other success than to condemn them for both the one and the other;" in other words, either they would not live the life of chastity recommended, or they would be too dull to do it from proper motives. He concludes

the argument with saying; "It is therefore very improper that the women who have never been conscious of so much as the meaning of the word wisdom, shall be desired to follow the system of sacred knowledge." No other mode remains for the poor creature, therefore, but that of preventing their going astray,—or of living chastly from wrong motives, by previously burning them alive. The Opponent is now completely silenced, and at once gives up his argument.

These are the grounds on which all those who oppose the abolition of the practice, still desire to preserve this privilege of *burning alive their mothers, their sisters, and their daughters.* It is not because it is sanctioned by the Hindoo law, for their greatest legislator, whose authority is paramount to every other, *positively forbids it* by enjoining on widows a contrary course. It is not that those few writers who have recommended the practice (for none of them have had the audacity to *command* it in opposition to their great legislator,) recommend it as a superior course, the dictate of more exalted virtue, for *they themselves despise the course they thus recommend to the poor widow, and regard with the utmost contempt the motive and principle of action they endeavour to infuse into her mind.* But this *unparalleled course of murder* is practised *wholly* as a PREVENTATIVE! But as a preventative of what? the effects of their dulness! their inability to comprehend "the instructions of sacred Wisdom!" What then would be these effects? That they would live a life of abstinence and chastity from improper motives, from a desire after final beatitude! and thus loosing final beatitude, only obtain heaven. Yet what does this burning system itself profess to hold out to the poor widow? Only a little evanescent bliss for a limited time. As for the other part, the poor widow's dragging her murderous or ungrateful husband out of the hands of Yum, (death,) as a snake-catcher drags a snake out of his hole, it were much better not done. If he have died under the dominion of such barbarous, or ungrateful dispositions, it were better far to leave him in the hands of Yum, for a season, to be taught better principles, than to take him with her to heaven with these feelings remaining within him. A wretched heaven indeed she would be likely to experience during these thirty-five millions of years. If he did not *murder* her there, it would be merely because she could not become mortal again, till she had worn out this long period of misery. What then is even pretended as the superior advantage of burning? Nothing: while on their own principles it is optional, the option is quite against the widow's interests. But is it to be endured that a poor widow should be burnt merely on account of dulness and stupidity? Is it thus that their mothers and sisters are to be treated?

But this honest declaration that their chief motive for supporting this system of burning is furnished by women's stupidity, brings to light a part of the creed of these advocates for matricide, which few ever suspected to belong to Hindoism. The whole of the sex, are hereby doomed to *interminable misery*, since they are declared to be such that it would be improper for them even *to be desired* to follow that system of sacred knowledge universally esteemed by the Hindoo writers *the only path* to final beatitude. Astonishing! We have

heard that Mousulmans exclude women from the felicity of the blessed, but this is entirely under the idea of their being without a soul. But if Hindoo women have no souls, what part of them is to enjoy this Heaven of bliss with their husbands for thirty-five millions of years? If, in the language of Hareeta, already quoted, "until the wife does not burn herself in the fire, she cannot get rid of her feminine body," then by that act she does get rid of her body; else, what avails this murderous rite? But if she then gets rid of her body, what is left of her? a soul, a spirit. But of what materials is this soul or spirit formed? Do they suppose it to be formed of matter, or to be a part of the Eternal Spirit? If they say it is formed of matter they degrade their daughters, and sisters, and mothers, beneath the very beasts around them; for there is not a dog that passes by, a reptile that crawls on the earth, or a jackal that howls by night around their cottage, which they do not suppose to be animated by a portion of the Eternal Brumhu. But if they allow that they have souls, and still cannot obtain final beatitude by burning themselves, then this system, *dooms their souls to interminable misery.* To what absurdity—to what contradiction even of the whole system of Hindoism, have these Advocates for burning their mothers and sisters reduced themselves! After all their pleadings for tenderness to their religious prejudices, it appears evident that this murderous practice is not more contrary to humanity than it is subversive of their own religious dogmas.

But perhaps these advocates for the burning system will urge, that the fear of the poor widow's mistaking through dulness the way to final beatitude, and only reaching heaven, is not the only reason which makes them so desirous of sending her through the flames to enjoy bliss with her deceased husband, that it is rather the fear of something worse. This indeed is strongly hinted by the Advocate, in his reply to the Opponent on his expressing his hope that were widow's after their husband's death disciplined in sacred wisdom, they might attain final beatitude, which by burning themselves with their husbands they can never attain. In this reply, declaring that the attempt would be vain, he adds; "as you say to discipline them in the sacred wisdom, it would be attended with no other success than *to condemn them for both the one and the other.*" But in what way could their being permitted to live and receive instruction condemn them for both the one and the other; or, in other words, cause them to loose every hope of bliss? Their dulness, even in living a life of abstinence and chastity from an improper motive, could only make them fall short of final beatitude; what then should condemn them to the loss of all felicity? The meaning is self-evident: the writer intends to say, that instead of persevering in a life of chastity, they might possibly go astray and thus incur the condemnation hinted, which, indeed, nothing but a deviation of this nature could make them incur, since he has already declared, that deeds done from the meanest motive, from "amours, anger or fear," are still available in the case of a woman's burning herself! and hence the merit of a life of self-denial and chastity cannot of course be destroyed by its motives. He evidently means to say, that as *they would not live a life of chastity, their burning themselves is the only*

preventive of their condemnation. And have they then this shocking idea of their own daughters, and sisters, and mothers? Will nothing preserve them in widowhood from a life of lewdness but their being burnt alive? Then a Suttee at once loses both its name and its nature. It is no longer the effect of chaste affection; it is *the highest dishonour to every family in which it may happen.* It proclaims in the loudest manner that, the victim, *is so corrupt in her disposition, so impure in her mind, that they have no method of keeping her from a life of unchastity but that of burning her alive.*

But granting all this; is it right that this *preventive measure* should be adopted with any one, much less with such near relatives? Is it agreeable to natural equity that a person should be burnt alive, not *for* impurity of conduct, but *to prevent it?* If it be, ought it to be confined to one sex? ought it not to be extended to the other likewise? Surely if this *preventive course* be allowable at all, it ought not to be confined to the most virtuous, merely because they are the most defenceless; it ought to be extended farther, to the *advocates* of the measure themselves. If they do not discover an equal disposition to impurity, they may to other vices equally injurious to society, and according to their own creed equally punishable in the other world. The same *preventive* might with equal benevolence be exercised on them at stated periods, or at least on such of them as seem most likely to perpetrate vice; and if they were less fond of the burning system than they say the poor widow is, they might be permitted to choose any other mode of dying, and thus the city and the country would, in due time, be purified in the most effectual manner; the purity of those left behind, and the reflection that all either burnt or hanged on this *preventive system*, were as assuredly in the enjoyment of bliss they would have forfeited by living, as the immolated widow is in the enjoyment of bliss in heaven with her deceased husband, might well reconcile us to the fewness of our neighbours.

The author having thus far silenced the Opponent, now attempts to justify their binding the poor widow fast to the corpse of her deceased husband, their heaping wood upon her and pressing her down with bamboos. For this purpose he makes the Opponent, after acknowledging that the Advocate, for the system had given "the just sense of various shastras," observe, that instead of causing the women to mount the burning pile, as the laws direct, they make them first mount the pile, and then, having strongly tied the said widows to the corpse of their husbands, heap them over and over with wood and large bamboos, and setting fire thereon, burn them to death. "We proclaim," adds he, "that you must not slay women in such a manner." To this the Advocate does not reply by denying the truth of this shocking fact, or by urging that it is too strongly stated; but he defends it by saying that "in whatever country the practice is to mount the full burning pile, there it is indisputable; but that in those countries where this is not the practice, this following of local custom is not inconsistent with the shastras, quoting several authors to show, that the usages and customs of a country ought to be observed. The Opponent is then made to reply that, by this rule, those who, residing in

forests and mountains make it their profession to kill living creatures, are to be held blameless. "By no means," says the Advocate, "for the actions of these rude foresters are not approved by men of fidelity, and the laws on the head of Shuhumurun have been regularly maintained by the holy sages, philosophers, and the learned." The plain meaning is, that the learned have themselves introduced into Bengal this custom of firmly binding women to the corpse of the deceased husband, heaping wood on them, and pressing them down with large bamboos from a regard to the custom of the country, when no such custom existed till created by them!

The manner in which the Advocate justifies their violating the woman's promise to *mount the burning pile*, is still more singular. The woman, before she burns, pronounces what is termed the Sunkulpa, which is couched in the following terms—"*I will mount the* BURNING *pile*." Adverting to this the Opponent says, "How can the Sunkulpa be completed, because it is pronounced with a promise to *mount* a burning pile? instead of which they mount it before it touches fire." This difficulty the Advocate removes in a moment. Says he, "Whatever you say regarding the incompletion of the Sunkulpa arises from your inattention; for should a little part of a village or a cloth be consumed by fire, it is then said, even by learned men, that the village or cloth was burnt. In the same manner a little burning pile is also called a burning pile, and in that case the Sunkulpa was not incomplete." As much as to say, if a single twig be set on fire, this constitutes a burning pile! In this manner do these men, with the most daring effrontery, *sport with violating even their own most sacred formulas, for the sake of securing the destruction of a poor defenceless widow.*

The next reply is, for its *levity* and *falsehood*, if possible, *still more disgusting*. The Opponent is made to answer; "I approve of your saying this; but from what instances the people attending funeral ceremonies tie up the women that are about to mount the burning pile? and why are they not guilty of the sin of slaying women?" To this the Advocate replies; "In the aforesaid text of *Hareeta* it was expressed, that until the women themselves cause their bodies to be consumed in the fire, they cannot finally get rid of their sex. In which case, should any part of their bodies, while burning asunder in the piles *be slipped out thereof, it cannot be wholly consumed.*" It is difficult to say, whether the *indelicacy*, the *shocking levity*, or the *impudent falsehood* of this reply be most to be detested. Granting that the *horrid rite* requires every particle of the body of the wretched victim to be consumed, does their binding her secure this? It secures her *death* it is true; but do they bind down every limb of their helpless victim? if they did, would not the cords be the first fuel for the flame? For men *thus to sport with decency, humanity, and truth, in defence of* MURDER *offered to a British public, is of itself sufficient to condemn for ever the* INHUMAN CUSTOM. The Opponent having expressed his approbation of this reason for binding women, has only one scruple left, which is, whether those who assist in burning the widow are not guilty of sin. To this the Advocate replies, that it rather ex-

alts them to glory than renders them guilty of sin, which he confirms by reciting the following example from *Mutsya-poorana;* "There was a prostitute named Leelavutee, who having resolved to make an offering of an artificial salt-hill, one goldsmith undertook the work, and perceiving it to be a divine action he took nothing from the girl for his hire, but constructed for her a salt-hill with so much elegance that afterwards, in reward thereof, the said poor and theological goldsmith, together with his wife, was endowed with immense riches, and became himself the monarch of the seven-dweep universe, with a shining form equal to the rays of ten thousand suns." Hence he gives the Opponent to understand, that whoever assists in burning a widow is likely to reap glory, as well as this theological goldsmith for assisting the prostitute in her devout offering. Thus do the supporters of this system, by the *most idle fables*, as well as the *most indecent examples*, trifle with the *real murder* of their nearest female relatives.

As the only reason why this murderous custom is still permitted to pollute the land with blood, when the exposure of infants, and men's voluntarily devoting themselves to death, have been abolished by public authority, must be sought in the idea entertained that it is indispensably enjoined by the Hindoo laws and system, we intreat permission to subjoin a few extracts from a document drawn up in Sungskrit, by Mrityoonjuy-Vidyalunkur, (the chief pundit successively in the College of Fort William, and in the Supreme Court,) at the request of the chief Judge in the Sudder Dewanee Adawlut, who wished him to ascertain, from a comparison of all the works extant on the subject, the precise point of law relative to burning widows, according to those who recommend the practice. This document, as the Compiler of it, from his own extensive learning and the assistance of his friends, had an opportunity of consulting more works on the subject than almost any pundit in this Presidency, may be regarded as possessing the highest legal authority according to the Hindoos. After having consulted nearly thirty works on the subject, current in Bengal and the northern, western, and southern parts of Hindostan, among which are all those quoted for the practice by the author of this pamphlet, he says; "Having examined all these works and weighed their meaning, I thus reply to the questions I have been desired to answer.—The Juttee Mulla Bilas shastra directs the following formula to be addressed to the bride by the priest at the time of marriage, 'be thou perpetually the companion of thy husband, in life and in death.' Hareeta, *a later writer*, says that it is the inheritance of every woman belonging to the four casts, not being pregnant or not having a little child, to burn herself with her husband." The Compiler afterwards quotes *Vishnoo-moonee* as speaking thus, "'let the wife either embrace a life of abstinence and chastity, or mount the burning pile;' but he forbids the latter to the unchaste." He then enumerates particularly the various rules laid down by him and others who have followed him on the same side of the question, relative to the time and circumstances in which a woman is permitted to burn herself, and in what cases she is even by them absolutely forbidden. These extracts show that binding the woman, and the other acts of additional cruelty which the author of this pamphlet justifies, are totally forbidden. The *Soodheekoumoodee* as quoted by the Compiler says; "Let the mother enter the fire after the son has kindled it around his father's corpse; but to the father's corpse and the mother

let him not set fire; if the son set fire to the *living* mother he has on him the guilt of murdering both a woman and a mother." Thus the possibility of a woman being bound to her husband's corpse is taken away: *the son is not to be, in the least degree, accessary to the mother's death;* if she burn herself at all, it must be by throwing herself into the flames already kindled. And the *Nirnuya-sindhoo* forbids the use of any bandage, bamboos, or wood, by way of confining the woman on the funeral pile; nor before she enters it must the least persuasion be used, nor must she be placed on the fire by others. Thus the practice as existing in Bengal *is deliberate murder*, even according to the legal authorities which recommend burning as optional.

Mrityoonjuy however shows, from various authors, that though burning is termed optional, it is not to be *recommended.* To this effect he quotes the *Vijuyuntee;* "While Brumhachurya and burning are perfectly optional, burning may arise from concupiscence, but Brumhachurya cannot; hence they are not equally worthy, how then can they be equally optional? By Brumhachurya the widow obtains bliss though she have no son." He then quotes several authors, as declaring, that women ought not to burn, because it is merely a work of concupiscence; the *Julwa-mala-vilas* and others as declaring that the practice is merely the effect of cupidity, and not the fruit of a virtuous and constant mind; and the *Mitakshura* as declaring, that by embracing a life of abstinence the widow, by means of divine wisdom, may obtain beatitude; and hence, that a woman's burning herself is improper: adding, that *in former ages nothing was heard of women's burning themselves: it is found only in this corrupt age.*

The following is the conclusion drawn by this able Pundit and Jurist. —"After perusing many works on this subject, the following are my deliberate ideas. Vishnoo-moonee and various others say, that the husband being dead, the wife may either embrace a life of abstinence and chastity, or mount the burning pile; but *on viewing the whole I esteem a life of abstinence and chastity to accord best with the law;* the preference appears evidently to be on that side. Vyas, Sungkoo, Ungeera, and Hareeta, speaking of a widow burning, say, that by burning herself with her husband she may obtain connubial bliss in heaven; while, by a life of abstinence and chastity, she, attaining sacred wisdom, may certainly obtain final beatitude. Hence to destroy herself for the sake of a little evanescent bliss, cannot be her duty; burning is for none but for those who, despising final beatitude, desire nothing beyond a little short-lived pleasure. Hence *I regard a woman's burning herself as an unworthy act, and a life of abstinence and chastity as highly excellent. In the shastras appear many prohibitions of a woman's dying with her husband, but against a life of abstinence and chastity there is no prohibition.* Against her burning herself the following authorities are found. In the Meemangshadurshun it is declared, that every kind of self-inflicted injury is sin. The Sankhya says, that a useless death is absolutely sinful. The killing for sacrifice commanded by the shastras has a reasonable cause, and is yet sinful in a certain degree, because it destroys life. And while, by the Meemangsha, either of the two may be chosen; by the Sankhya, a life of abstinence

and chastity is alone esteemed lawful. But by the Vedanta, all works springing from concupiscence are to be abhorred and forsaken; hence a woman's burning herself from the desire of connubial bliss, ought certainly to be rejected with abhorrence."

He further adds, "No blame whatever is attached to those who prevent a woman burning. In the shastras it is said, that Kundurpa being consumed to ashes by the eye of Shiva, his wife, Rutee, determined to burn herself; and commanded her husband's friend, Mudhoo, to prepare the funeral pile. Upon this the gods forbade her; on which account she desisted, but by Kalee-das no blame is attached to them for this conduct. Thus also in the *Shree-Bhaguvut;* a woman, Kripee, had a son, a mighty hero, from love to whom she forbore to burn herself with her husband; yet she was deemed guilty of no sin therein. Now also we hear of sons and other relatives attempting to dissuade a woman from burning; yet they are esteemed guilty of no crime. It is also evident that a woman, in thus burning herself, dies merely from her own self-will, and from no regard to any shastra; such *the command of a thousand shastras would not induce to die.* They merely reason thus, 'By the death of my husband I have sustained an irreparable loss; it is better for me do die than to live;' hence a woman determines to die: and her relatives seeing this mind in her provide the funeral pile, and say, 'if you are determined to die, to die by falling from a precipice would be tedious, die in this manner:' thus a father who has a son determined to go to a distant country, finding all dissuasion vain, at length sends a guide with him who knows all the rivers and dangerous places. The various shastras therefore describe this action as being merely that of one who, having received an incurable wound, is determined to die, whether by falling from a precipice, by fire, or by water."

After this full investigation by one so able and possessing such opportunities, the subject, as far as relates to the law of the Hindoos, or to the countenance it receives from the Hindoo system, may well be supposed to be fully before the public. All that the author of this pamphlet, assisted by all the pundits who wish for the continuance of the practice, has been able to bring forth as at all countenancing it, is confined to the opinions of five or six authors, amidst that multitude included by the Hindoos under the term of "the learned:" and after the examination of nearly thirty works written either for or against this practice, the hope of obtaining further light respecting it from the Hindoo shastras, is vain. The question is now left to be determined wholly on the principles of equity and reason.

While the horrid practice is allowed to have been recommended by certain writers, it is evident that it was never considered as a *law,* or as a religious injunction essential to the duty of a good Hindoo. If it be a law, the greater part of India must have lived in a state of direct disobedience to the laws of their own religion; for as the recommendation is directed to widows of every cast, it must have been imperative on all, at least as matter of conscience. Yet, not to advert to what has been advanced, that it was unknown in the first and purest ages of Hindoism, if the number of widows burnt in Bengal annu-

ally do not exceed five hundred, it cannot be obeyed even in Bengal, where it is most prevalent, by at least ninety-nine out of a hundred of the population, and in the western part of Hindostan by a still greater proportion;* while, in the southern part of the British dominions, it is said to be scarcely regarded at all.

While recommended by a few of the Hindoo writers, it has been found by others to involve principles directly subversive of Hindoism. It is evident, that a woman's burning herself has never been considered as a deed *commanded.* Hence, as Mrityoonjuy justly observes, no blame has ever been attached, by any of their writers, to those who have prevented its being done: which would have been the case had it been regarded as a religious duty. Instances enough may be found in the Hindoo shastras, of the strong sense they have of the sin of obstructing or preventing a religious act; many examples are related of men said to be destroyed by devotees for interrupting them only in their evening ceremonies.

But many have gone farther, and condemned the *very principle* on which it has been recommended. Others among them, hold that certain deeds, though done from the most unworthy motives, are in themselves so available as to merit a certain degree of recompense. In this class those rank who contend for the burning of widows. All these deeds the more learned treat with the greatest contempt, declaring them to be nothing more than vice in another shape. These writers therefore view a woman's burning herself as perfectly unlawful. Thus those who form *the great support of the Hindoo system, totally condemn the very principle on which the practice is at all recommended, while they insist that the law commands a widow to live a life of abstinence and chastity.* That these compose the greater part of the Hindoos, may be inferred from the proportion of widows thus burnt alive when compared with the whole population of Hindostan.

Such is the real state of things relative to this practice, even when described by its most strenuous advocates. As a *command* it has not the least foundation in the Hindoo system. As a *recommendation* it has not been supported by one fifth of the Hindoo writers on ethics or jurisprudence, nor practically regarded by a thousandth part of those who profess Hindoism. It is in *direct opposition* to the command of the great Hindoo lawgiver, and it is grounded on principles completely subversive of the Hindoo system, and opposed to that course which the Hindoos believe to be the only path to final happiness. Yet this practice, *thus opposed to their great legislator's command—to the very nature of their religious system—and to all their best ideas of virtue, is kept alive in the metropolis and its vicinity by acts of unfeeling coercion;* while in the provinces of Hindostan, which is held to have been the chief seat of every important transaction detailed in their

* "Supposing the entire Hindoo population of the Bengal Presidency to be 50,000,000, and the annual deaths to be 1 in 33, or above 1,500,000; a sixth of this number, or 250,000 might, on a general computation, be assumed as the number of Hindoo females becoming widows, of whom little more than 600 devote themselves on the death of their husbands." (Par. Papers, July, 1825, p. 11.) How easily might these be saved by Britain's paternal arm. Ed.

mythology, the practice has nearly expired beneath the feelings of common humanity.

After a justification of the system has appeared in the shape of an appeal to the public both in India and in Britain, in the English language, it would be criminal to remain silent, and a grievous offence against humanity to treat the subject in a cursory manner. When it is considered, that this practice causes the death of a greater number of persons in one year, who, *if they ought not to be thus burnt alive, involve the country in all the guilt of innocent blood*, than are publicly executed for their crimes throughout the whole of India in the course of twenty years, it cannot be wrong to call to this momentous subject the attention of every friend to his country. How would Britain feel, if within herself a hundred innocent persons suffered death by some mistake of law in the course of a year! How then ought she to feel when in her dominions in the East, *seven or eight hundred innocent widows are every year burnt to death?* Were this inhuman persecution, which, in the number of its annual victims, exceeds all that papal superstition ever brought to the stake in Britain in the course of a century, directed by the supporters of this practice against any particular *sect*, or class of men, they would long ago have appealed to their rulers for redress, or they would have left the spot where they were treated with such cruelty. But how can mothers and sisters make an appeal against their own relatives? How can a wife, a mother, withdraw from her own family? They may endure continual agony under the apprehension of the dreadful doom which they know awaits them, —they may feel their anguish renewed at the sight of every female neighbour they behold led forth to the flames—they may tremble at every touch of disease that affects their husbands, and weep at every recollection of their hapless children—but can they leave the scene of suffering? can they make known their sorrows? dare they betray, the anguish which preys on their vitals? They lie bound as sheep for the slaughter;—and thus they must remain, suffering in silence, till *British sympathy shall duly realize their hitherto unknown, unpitied misery.**———

SECTION V.

The present partial interference of the British Government promotes the INCREASE, CELEBRITY, *and* SUPPOSED LEGALITY *of Suttees.*

THE sentiment of the Poet, "'Tis but lame kindness that does its work by halves," applies with peculiar force to the Regulations enacted in British India relative to the burning of widows. This will appear by the following extracts from the five volumes of Parliamentary Papers relating to Hindoo widows: printed July, 1821; June, 1823; June, 1824; July, 1825; and May, 1827.—

* Friend of India, (monthly series,) Vol. ii. Page 453—483.

"It appears to me that, if the practice is allowed to exist at all, the less notice we take of it the better. The interference of the police may, in some cases, have induced compliance with the rules of the shastras; but *the official attendance of the darogah stamps every regular Suttee with the sanction of Government;* and I must humbly submit, that authorizing a practice is not the way to effect its gradual abolition."* (W. Ewer, Esq. Act. Sup. of Police, Lower Provinces, Calcutta, Nov. 1818.)

"Mr. Chapman entirely agrees with Mr. Oakley that the interference of Government has been a cause of the increased prevalence of Suttee."† (W. Ewer, Esq. &c.)

"I should not deem it improbable that the interference of the police officers, under the orders of Government, may have tended to increase the practice, by acting as a stimulus, in the same manner that the interference of European Governments with the religious tenets of any sect, has always tended to increase the zeal and confirm the prejudices of the sectaries."‡ (J. Ewing, Esq. Magistrate, Sylhet.)

"Previous to 1813, no interference on the part of the police was authorized, and widows were sacrificed legally or illegally as it might happen; but the Hindoos were then aware that the Government regarded the custom with natural horror, and would do any thing short of direct prohibition to discourage and gradually to abolish it. The case is now altered. The police officers are ordered to interfere, for the purpose of ascertaining that the ceremony is performed in conformity with the rules of the shastras, and in that event to allow its completion. This is *granting the authority of Government for the burning of widows;* and it can scarcely be a matter of astonishment that the number of the sacrifices should be doubled when *the sanction of the ruling power is added to the recommendation of the shastra.*"§ (H. Oakley, Esq. Mag. Hooghly, Dec. 1818.)

"The Governor General in Council is reluctantly led to express his apprehension that the greater confidence with which the people perform this rite under the sanction of Government, as implied or avowed in the circular orders already in force, combined with the excitement of religious bigotry by the continual agitation of the question, may have tended to augment, rather than diminish, the frequency of these sacrifices."‖ (Calcutta, Dec. 1819.) The increase here referred to was evident from the returns of Suttees in the several districts subordinate to the Presidency of Fort William, viz. in the year,

"1815 .... 378.
1816 .... 442.
1817 .... 707.
1818 .... 839."¶

Relative to the increase of Suttees, the Magistrates in the Allypore district remark; "The abstract statement of the number of Suttees exhibits the frequency of these abominable sacrifices so progressively and materially increased since the period referred to, (from 1815 to 1818,) as to justify our being confirmed in the belief, before more than

* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 229 † p. 232. ‡ p. 232. § p. 236. ‖ p. 242. ¶ p. 241.

once expressed by this, to the superior Court, that any interference, save that of *a total prohibition under the severest penalties*, will ever be productive of a mistaken spirit of jealousy and opposition, which will hope by encouraging the prevalence of this superstitious usage, to induce us to discontinue altogether our interference."* (Allypore, March, 1819.)

"As far as my observation goes, I shall say that the humane intentions of the framers of the Regulations regarding these ceremonies will not be fully answered. It can hardly be doubted but that the necessary presence of the police officers of Government, at these immolations, stamps on them that character of *strict legality* and seems to afford them that degree of *countenance* on the part of Government which must produce an evil effect."† (J. F. Petty, Esq. Mag. Southern Concan.)

"After having weighed, with every deliberation, the mode of carrying into effect the intention of Government, I became most fully satisfied *that if the prohibitory points to the sacrifice were to be determined by native police officers, the practice of this awful rite would shortly multiply manifold.*" ‡ (J. Marriott, Esq. Mag. Tannah, Sep. 1819.)

"Our Government, by modifying the thing and issuing orders about it,—orders which even the Government and the Sudder Judges themselves do not appear clearly to comprehend, have thrown the ideas of the Hindoos upon the subject into a complete state of confusion. They know not what is allowed and what interdicted; but, upon the whole, they have a persuasion that our Government, whom they most erroneously suppose to be indifferent about the lives of the natives, are *rather favourable to Suttees than otherwise.* They will then believe that we abhor the usage when we prohibit it *in toto* by an absolute and peremptory law. They have no idea that we might not do so with the most perfect safety. *They conceive our power and our will to be commensurate.*"§ (C. Smith, Esq. Second Judge, Calcutta, Aug. 1821.)

The Court of Directors, of the Hon. East India Company, in a letter to the Governor General in Council, under date London, June, 1823, thus express their opinion upon the subject of partial interference;—"To us it appears very doubtful (and we are confirmed in this doubt by respectable authority) whether the measures which have been already taken have not tended rather *to increase than to diminish the frequency of the practice.* Such a tendency is, at least, not unnaturally ascribed to a Regulation which, *prohibiting a practice only in certain cases, appears to sanction it in all others.* It is to be apprehended, that where the people have not previously a very enthusiastic attachment to the custom, a law which shall explain to them the cases in which it ought not to be followed may be taken as a direction for adopting it in all others. It is, moreover, with much reluctance that we can consent to make the British Government, by a specific permission of the Suttee, *an ostensible party to the sacrifice;* we are averse also to the practice of making British Courts expounders and vindicators of the

* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 218. † p. 254. ‡ p. 255, 256. § No. ii. p. 67.

Hindoo religion, when it leads to acts which, not less as Legislators than as Christians, we abominate."*

"A general opinion prevails (in which I most cordially concur), that, in order to reduce the frequency of this rite, it should be neglected and treated with as little notice as possible."† (J. J. Sparrow, Esq. Col. and Mag. Southern Concan, Feb. 1822.)

The opinions of the second, third, and fifth Judges of the Nizamut Adawlut in Calcutta, are as follows:—

"The second Judge cannot subscribe to any instructions that have a tendency to *modify, systematize, or legalize the usage*, or that appear to regard a legal Suttee as at all better than an illegal one. He is convinced, that if this mode of issuing orders under the sanction of Government to regulate Suttees is continued, *the practice will take such deep root, under the authority of the supreme power of the country, that to eradicate it will become impossible.* The usage will be much more likely to fall into disuse under a total neglect on the part of Government, than under the present system of attention and inquiry, which serves but to keep the feelings of the Hindoo population alive upon the point, and to give a sort of interest and celebrity to the sacrifice, which is in the highest degree favourable to its continuance and extension."‡ (C. Smith, Esq.)

"I conceive that we have already done a great deal of mischief in this way, and that instead of diminishing we have increased the evil."§ (J. T. Shakespear, Esq.)

"I confess that my own opinion inclines me to impute to the Regulations a positively pernicious tendency, in proportion to the degree in which they have brought the sacrifices under the more immediate cognizance of the officers of Government, whose presence at the ceremony, instead of operating as a restraint, has, I am afraid, contributed to invest it with additional solemnity, and to confer on the performance of it, in the mistaken view of the natives, a species of *authoritative sanction* which it was not before considered to possess."‖ (W. B. Martin, Esq.)

"It can hardly be doubted but that the printed work regarding Suttees has given the ceremony, in the eyes of the natives, *a stamp of legality which in our Provinces it never before possessed*, and it may therefore be questioned whether, upon the whole, more harm than good may not have followed its publication."¶ (Bombay, Jud. Cons. June, 1820.)

"This permission I found that the people most ignorantly and perversely abused; and, at every stage of my argument with them, an appeal was made to *the order of Government*, as a vindication of their conduct. There can be no doubt of the benevolent intention of Government in issuing such an order, and as little of its beneficial influence in many instances, as it prevents the employment of force; but, the people construe it into *a direct approval* of the dreadful act; and for a long time '*The order of Government*' seemed to form a triumphant answer to all my arguments." And again:—"The only answer they attempted to give was, 'It is the custom, and we have got the Government order for so doing.'"** (Extracts from Bombay Courier, Oct. 1824.)

The last Parliamentary Papers on the Immolation of Hindoo widows,

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* Par. Papers, Vol. iii. p. 45. † p. 48. ‡ Vol. iv. p. 148. § p. 149. ‖ p. 149. ¶ p. 156. **212, 213

printed by order of the Hon. House of Commons, May, 17, 1827, contain additional confirmation of these sentiments.

E. L. Warner, Esq. Act. Mag. 24 Pergunnahs, states, that he "finds it difficult to account for the increase of Suttees, unless it may be attributed to *the orders of Government*; for the attendance of the police officers, giving *a legal sanction to the practice*, and by so doing, enhancing the reputation of the family of the person who devotes herself."*

"It seems undeniable that in tolerating the practice under any *regulations and restrictions whatsoever*, you tolerate what you have virtually forbidden in those regulations, and afford the natives ground for concluding that the practice of Suttee was to be excepted from their operation."† (Bombay Regulations.)

S. Marriott, Esq. Magistrate in the Northern Concan says; "It was the prevalent opinion among the natives, that *this sacrifice would not be tolerated by the British Government;* under these circumstances, to have given instructions to my people, would at once have informed the community that the sacrifice of the Suttee is allowed by the British Government, and that therefore it might have been performed with impunity. It would have opened a source of emolument to such native officers as are corrupt enough to sell their authority at the expense of a human victim. With the confidence which would have been thus given to its performance, and with the inducements which I have mentioned to the police officers to encourage the practice, *I am certain the number of victims would have greatly increased!*"‡

J. H. Harington, Esq. officiating Chief Judge, in Calcutta, in a minute upon the Suttee Reports, dated Feb. 4, 1825, candidly acknowledges that the present Regulations relative to Suttees, make them legal. "It seems now to be too late to examine the general question adverted to by the Hon. Court, whether a prohibition of the practice, in certain cases only, may not appear to give it public sanction in others; in truth *such sanction is virtually and effectually given by the circular orders in force*, for these alone, exempt the parties concerned in the performance of even a voluntary immolation, from the operation of the regulation already noticed."§

Another Judge in Calcutta, C. T. Sealy, Esq. under date Jan. 5, 1825, declares: "I have always been of opinion that *we increased the number of Suttees by sanctioning them.*"‖

A. Robertson Esq. Collector of Candish, to the Commissioner in the Deccan, writes, July 31, 1824. "I decidedly do not think that Suttees should in any way be *sanctioned by public enactment;* I feel a degree of horror at thus giving this practice such formal sanction. Laws if they cannot correct evils, should not perpetuate them. Hereafter it may be possible, indeed it may be anticipated at no distant period, that the practice will be abolished by law, but this desirable event would be retarded, if not defeated, by such an enactment as the one in question."¶

The Governor of Bombay, the Hon. M. Elphinstone, in a minute, dated June, 1825, relative to the presence of a Magistrate at a Suttee,

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* Par. Pap. Vol. v. p. 2. † p. 4. ‡ p. 22. § p. 46. ‖ p. 50. ¶ p. 135.

remarks; "In general such attendance is inexpedient, as tending to give more dignity to the ceremony and to render the merit of the sufferer more conspicuous."*

F. Warden, Esq. Member of Council, Bombay, in a minute at the same time, states; "We ought either to issue a positive prohibition, or abstain altogether from manifesting the slightest anxiety on the subject: the attendance of European functionaries, where the efforts are unavailing to prevent the ceremony, appears rather calculated to inspire the Suttee with a greater degree of resolution, in affording Europeans a proof of the firmness with which the victim seeks and endures the sacrifice. Any intermediate measure between a positive prohibition and perfect neglect and indifference appears to me to be most impolitic."†

To add but one more extract from these Papers in this Section, the general sentiment of which is in accordance with the language of the Hon. Governor of Bombay: "All interference must attract public attention to the practice, and so far hold out *an additional temptation to families ambitious of this sort of glory.*"‡

The Speech of J. Poynder, Esq. on Human Sacrifices in India, at the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, March, 1827, contains some important confirmation of the statements contained in this Section.—This Gentleman gives his own opinion of the nature of the present legislation relative to Suttees: "It was impossible that any Government could promise itself that the correction of the abuses, of any given system, could of itself produce the abolition of the system. It is to be greatly deplored, that the inevitable consequences of permitting certain sacrifices as legal went *virtually to sanction and set the broad seal of Government upon all that was not prohibited. Nine* instances out of 654 (in 1821) which appear to have been saved by the retraction of the vow, or by the Police, afford matter of congratulation to the Authorities; but it does not seem to have been considered that probably *the greater number of those who perished are to be referred to the sanction afforded by the Regulations to the performance of the rite.*"§

W. Chapman, Esq. Magistrate in Jessore, under date Dec. 1818, thus unequivocally declares his conviction of the injurious tendency of the Regulations; "I chiefly attribute the cause of the increase (of Suttees) to the interference of the Government. The interference of the Police has, by legalizing the practice, increased the number by withdrawing from all the danger of any penalty."‖

The Rev. T. Thomason, late Chaplain of the Hon. Company in Calcutta, in a letter dated Feb. 1827, speaking of the Bengal Government requiring that the Suttee should be performed agreeably to certain regulations, declares; "The measure actually legalized it by British authority, to the great joy and benefit of the Brahmuns, securing to them and even increasing their fees by multiplying the formalities. Every evil might have been anticipated from this unwise act. This regulation legalized the Suttees. The Government became by

* Par. Papers, Vol. v. p. 144 † p. 149. ‡ p. 153. § Poynder's Speech, (Hatchard, London,) p. 32, 99. ‖ p. 48.

it, without intending it, *particeps criminis.* It pronounced that to be legal (under certain circumstances) which ought never, under any circumstances, to be deemed legal. If the Government interfere at all, their interference should be used to abolish, not to limit or sanction such an abomination. This I very strenuously maintained in argument with some persons *officially* concerned in the Regulation. The question has often been asked, whether this Regulation did in fact increase or diminish the number of Suttees. On a deliberate review of the whole case, I rest in the conviction *that the number has been increased rather than diminished.*"*

A Chaplain of the Hon. Company, in a letter dated Calcutta, Dec. 1820, addressed to a Member of Parliament, observes; "In this respect, the wisdom of our Government appears to the great body of judicious people amongst us, to be *rather timidity, or even guilty apathy.* It is notorious that these abominable sacrifices might be stopped *without exciting the least opposition,* and even with the general approbation of the natives. Yet we have, *in an evil hour,* sanctioned them, in a manner, by pronouncing them legal if performed under certain circumstances."†

W. Sherar, Esq. late Accomptant General in Bengal, in a letter dated March 14th, 1827, gives his unqualified disapprobation of the present system: "I consider the evil of the restrictive Regulation of 1812, respecting Suttees, *so great and lamentable as to require the earliest possible redress.* As things now stand, all the Suttees in Bengal are each one sanctioned by the presence and acquiescence of the Police Officers of the British Government! This evil, to the disgrace of our Government, has now been going on for fifteen years, and surely requires to be stopped without further delay."‡

To add but one more authority, R. Jackson, Esq. in his Speech at the discussion in the India House, (in March, 1827,) thus decidedly shows his views of the obligation of the Hon. Company and the Nation to suppress this horrid rite: "If such practices were continued longer under the authority of the Company, there was not a man in the Court who did not become *accessary to the crime of murder!* He that refrained from doing all in his power to prevent it, *on his head be the guilt of the sanction he gave.*"§

From these observations it is presumed that partial interference with the burning of Hindoo widows has not been attended with the desired end—the discountenance and decrease of Suttees; but that rather the appalling evil has increased in enormity, celebrity, and supposed legality. Humanity and justice dictate "a more excellent way," enjoining the ancient precept of the Almighty to Noah and his sons—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." (Gen. ix. 6.) May Britain "awake to righteousness," nor fear to spread her shield over the heads of the deluded and oppressed widows daily appointed to death by this unnatural and suicidal custom, and doubtless "the blessing of those who were ready to perish will come upon her, and she will cause the widows heart to sing for joy."

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* Poynder's Speech p. 66—69. † p. 68. ‡ p. 70. § Speech of R. Jackson, Esq. (Parbury, Leaden-Hall Street,) p. 9.

SECTION VI.

Authorities to confirm the propriety, safety, facility, and success of efforts for the suppression of Suttees.

The papers relating to the burning of Hindoo widows, printed by order of the Hon. House of Commons, contain numerous authorities for the immediate suppression of this dreadful rite.

"From what I have heard of several very respectable Brahmuns, I am almost satisfied that the exercise of a very trifling degree of authority would put a stop to this perversion of reason and humanity. It appears that the late *Peishwa* frequently *personally exerted himself* to dissuade women from becoming Suttees; and that he always took upon himself the charge of supporting those who attended to this advice. I shall be glad to use my influence at this place, in a similar manner, and have little doubt of the success of my interposition, in the majority of cases that may occur, when I have it in my power to assure the women of the means of subsistence."* (H. Pottinger, Esq. Collector, addressed to the Hon. M. Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay, Oct. 1818.)

"The letter from the Magistrate of Chinsurah deserves the serious attention of the Nizamut Adawlut and the Government. It appears that this abhorrent, and often utterly illegal practice, was forbidden by the foreign Governments of those Settlements; and that the prohibition was obeyed without a murmur. So little do the people appear to have interested themselves in the affair, that we find, from Mr. Forbes' letter, that the mere publication of an order from himself prohibiting the practice, effectually prevented it, and that no single instance of a woman burning herself has occurred since."† (E. Watson, Esq. Allypore, April, 1816.)

The Court of Nizamut Adawlut in June, 1817; endeavoured to overturn Mr. Watson's reasoning, as far as applied to the analogy of the cases cited, but it appears without success. They express in concurrence with him that, "There is a strong presumption that *little resistance would be opposed to the suppression of a practice so repugnant to the common feelings of humanity:* if from experience of continued abuses on the investigation or performance of female sacrifices, as now tolerated, it should at any time be *deemed necessary* to enact a Regulation, prohibiting the priesthood and kindred of the deceased, as well as all others from assisting in such sacrifices."‡ Surely it is *necessary* to endeavour to rescue five or six hundred deluded women from a most horrid death. How many Europeans in India imbibe, imperceptibly, a degree of the apathy of the Hindoos.

"If the British, *in imitation of the Mogul Government*, were to lay an immediate and positive inhibition upon it, and would declare the parties aiding in the ceremony indictable for murder, and proceed against them accordingly, *it must totally die away;* but if tolerated, under whatever restrictions, I do not hesitate to pronounce that it will, in a short time, become nearly as prevalent as it now is in Bengal."§ (W. Wright, Esq. Mag. Furruckabad, April, 1819.)

W. Ewer, Esq. Act. Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, Nov. 1818, acknowledges, "I have offered the grounds of my opini-

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* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 65. † p. 99, 100. ‡ p. 107. § p. 212.

on that the barbarous custom of Suttee may be prohibited without exciting any serious or general dissatisfaction among our Hindoo subjects."*

"I do not think that much, if any, difficulty would be experienced in abolishing the custom of Suttee, if a law for that purpose were to be established."† (W. P. Pechell, Esq. Mag. Chittagong, Dec. 1818.)

"I do not hesitate in offering my opinion, that a law for its abolition would only be objected to by *the heirs*, who derive worldly profit from the custom,—by Brahmuns, who partly exist by it,—and by those whose depraved nature leads them to look on a sacrifice as an highly entertaining show; at any rate the sanction of Government should be withdrawn without delay. The adoption of this measure will most likely be followed by a decrease in the number of Suttees, and the *Magistrate's feelings will not be outraged, as they frequently are at present*, by compelling him to so barbarous a custom."‡ (H. Oakley, Esq. Mag. Hooghly, Dec. 1818.)

"The interference of Government is well understood to be the Christian wish of humanity. The Rajah of this place is a Mousalman; and the Hindoos seem generally willing to embrace the excuse of the will of the reigning power to evade the Suttee, believed of their little read and less understood shastra."§ (R. Morrieson, Esq. Sory Burthom, Dec. 1818.)

"A law might doubtless be promulgated for the abolition of this practice, without causing any serious disturbance. It has already been done in regard to the sacrifice of children at Saugur and elsewhere, as well as the practice of destroying female infants, and the burying alive of women. Why, if these customs which were also generally practised, have been abolished by a humane Government, should not the practice of Suttee be abolished? The destruction of a woman, or of a child, in the eye of the law, is equal; the free consent alledged in palliation of the sacrifice appears to me inadmissible. No fair judgment can be passed upon a person *non compos mentis*, assenting to the performance of this act; for can a person be called actually in a sound state of mind under the agitation of grief? would a person's deposition, under this state of mind, be received in a court of justice in a cause where life and death are at stake? Look at the statements; they exhibit a class of people who must have been generally ignorant of the shastras."‖ (E. Lee Warner, Esq. Mag. 24 Pergunnahs Calcutta.)

C. Chapman, Esq. Magistrate in Jessore, under date Dec. 1818, thus addresses the Acting Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, Calcutta:—"Any law abolishing the Suttee, would be attended with no other effect than it should have under every good system of Government—the *immediate and due observance of its enactments*. I would most willingly undertake to promulgate any orders regarding its abolition, throughout the district under my charge, without dread of any ill consequences arising from the interference of Government."¶

G. Forbes, Esq. first Judge of the Calcutta Court of Circuit, thus writes to the Register of the Nizamut Adawlut, Aug. 1819;—"I

* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 229. † p. 233. ‡ p. 237. § p. 238. ‖ p. 239. ¶ p. 241.

take this opportunity to express my concurrence in the opinion which I found to prevail with *the judicial Officers at the several stations*, with whom I conversed on the subject, that the practice of Hindoo women burning themselves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, if prohibited by Government, might be effectually suppressed without apprehension of any serious obstacles. I am happy in being able to adduce an instance of effectual interference in the suppression of this barbarous custom under British authority. In the territory of Delhi, the late resident, Mr. Metcalfe, *never* (when apprized of the intention) *permitted the burning of a widow to take place, and was prepared to prevent the practice, whenever necessary, by forcible interference, but which was requisite* ONLY ON ONE OCCASION *that came under his immediate observation.* I have been induced to mention the instance of successful interference by the Resident of Delhi, as affording an example which I believe nearly every Magistrate in the country would, if authorized, be most happy to follow; and in order to show that there appears no insurmountable obstacle to a measure, with regard to the existency of which, if shown to be practicable, there can be but one sentiment."*

F. Warden, Esq. one of the Members of Council in Bombay, thus declares his opinion:—"I am convinced of the practicability of abolishing not only *this*, but also *every other sanguinary practice of the Hindoos*, and without endangering either the popularity or the security of our supremacy."†

J. O. Tod, Esq. Judge in the Masulipatam Zilla, under the Madras Presidency, thus expresses his opinion relative to suppressing Suttees, July, 1819:—"That the practice is by no means common in this part of the country; and that it might be altogether abolished by an ordinance of Government, without offence to the religious feelings or prejudices of the natives seems, not impossible from the following circumstance:—Application was once made to the criminal Judge, when he held the office of Magistrate, by the relations of a widow, for his permission to burn herself with the dead body of her husband. He informed them that the British Government made it a rule never to interfere with the religious prejudices or customs of the natives, and that therefore he would not give any order whatever to the woman *herself,* who might act as she should think became her; but he assured them that he would immediately commit, *as accomplices in the murder*, all persons who should in any way assist her to destroy herself, and the consequence was, that the woman did not burn, but is alive and well at this day. This measure did not cause the least dissatisfaction, on the contrary, the relations of the woman appeared pleased at her having obtained a decent pretext for avoiding the horrid ceremony.‡

C. H. Higginson, Judge at Trichinopoly, under date Feb. 1820, declares: —"If I were required to give my opinion as to the best means of putting a stop to the Suttee in future: I should say, that, the Collector and Magistrate ought to be authorized to issue a proclamation prohibiting altogether a custom so unnatural, and which, though permitted, does not by any means appear to be insisted upon by the shastras. I would authorize the Magistrate to declare, by proclamation, any person or persons assist-

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* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 243. † p. 261. ‡ Vol. ii. p. 85.

ing in the self-immolation of a widow, liable to be brought to trial as an accessary in homicide; and would issue strict orders to all heads of villages and Officers of Police, to put an immediate stop to any attempt at preparation for an "anugamanum," (Suttee.) In the present times the good sense and humane feelings of the Brahmuns, as well as the greater proportion of the Hindoo inhabitants, would point out to them the benevolent motive of Government, in prohibiting a practice, which has originated in ignorance and infatuation, and which must be reflected upon with abhorrence by every mind capable of distinguishing good from evil."*

The third Volume of Parliamentary Papers, printed June, 1824, contains little besides a detail of the number, names, casts, &c. of Suttees in 1821. The following expressions of public opinion on the abolition of the burning of widows, appear important:—

"As far as every information I can obtain, this revolting ceremony could be altogether prevented, by a short prohibitory enactment of the Legislature."† (R. C. Plowden, Esq. Barripore, June, 1822, to C. H. Hopper, Esq. Mag. of the 24 Pergunnahs, Calcutta.)

Inquiry having been made by the Superintendent of Police, Madras, relative to a woman burning herself, though dissuaded by her relatives, yet those relatives, upon her persisting in her intentions, desiring she should be permitted to do so, received the following reply from the Secretary of Government, dated Fort St. George, March, 7, 1823:—"I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date, and to express the opinion of the Hon. the Governor in Council, that all practical means should be employed for preventing the woman in question from making the intended sacrifice of herself. With that view, her relations should be informed, *that such a practice being contrary to the established usage of this place*, *cannot obtain the sanction of Government*, and that it is considered to be their duty to use their strongest persuasions and influence to forego her intentions. You will also apprize them that they will be held answerable for any interference of a contrary tendency."‡

J. H. Harington, Esq. officiating Chief Judge in Calcutta, in a minute relative to the Suttee of considerable length and interest, dated June, 1823, which was forwarded to the Court of Directors by the Governor General, Dec. 1824. (See Par. Papers, Vol. iii. p. 8—18.) says:—"I am desirous of putting upon record some considerations which appear to merit attention in any future deliberation upon this important question, and which, I acknowledge, have produced in my own mind a strong belief, if not a full conviction, that whenever it may be judged expedient to suppress this barbarous practice by legal prohibition, instead of restricting it to what is sanctioned by the shastra, as at present, *it will not be found impracticable, or, as far as I can judge, be attended with any serious political danger.* On a deliberate view of all those instances in which the laws, customs, and prejudices of the Hindoos, when found to be at variance with the principles of justice and good society, have been necessarily superseded and abrogated by the laws and regulations of the British Government,§

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* p. 101. † Vol. iii. p. 4. ‡ p. 51.

§ Such as the execution of Brahmuns; suppressing the sacrifice of children at Saugur; preventing women and children, in the provinces of Benares, from burning in a *koorh*, or circular inclosure, on the approach of a public officer to serve any judicial process on Brahmuns; abolishing Dhurna, infanticide among the Rajkoomars, burying widows alive, cruel ordeals, &c.—*See Asiatic Researches*, Vol. iv. p. 330.

and in the whole of which suppercession has been quietly submitted to, *as obviously and exclusively originating in motives of equity and humanity, unconnected with any degree of religious intolerance,* we may, I think, safely conclude that a similar result will attend the enactment of a legislative provision to prevent the yearly sacrifice of several hundreds of deluded unoffending females, born and living under the protection of the British Government." This document thus closes. Referring to certain probable excesses in the perpetration of Suttees, it is added, "In such a state of things I could not hesitate to adopt the opinion expressed by the second Judge of the Court of the Nizamut Adawlut, that the toleration of the practice of Suttees is a reproach to our Government; and *even now* I am disposed to agree with him, '*that the entire and immediate abolition of it would be attended with no sort of danger.*'"

Among the papers forwarded to the Hon. Court of Directors was one containing, says Mr. Harington, "An extract from a well-written paper, '*On female Immolation,*' published in the valuable periodical work entitled '*The Friend of India,*'* which the late Sir Henry Blossett and myself read on our voyage to India, and which appeared to both of us a powerful and convincing statement of the real facts and circumstances of the case."† A few paragraphs are given.

"We are confident that the continuance of the practice stands on the doctrine of *expediency alone*. This is its only prop; of which could it once be deprived it would fall beneath the weight of justice and humanity. The Government has done much to alleviate the misery of India, and to counteract the mischief of its native depravity; and were it practicable with one stroke of the pen to remove every misery, and diffuse happiness through the country, we are sure it would not be withheld for a moment. It cannot therefore be improper to weigh the question of expediency, and to collect into one focus all the light which can be obtained on the subject from our preceding transactions in India. And if it should appear that we have not been arrested in our career of justice by the prejudices of the natives, that on the contrary the Hindoos have already gone hand in hand with us, without discovering any hostility to our authority; there can be no reason to apprehend that, in the abolition of female immolation, we shall experience the least interruption. To prove this we will adduce three examples:—

"In the province of Guzerat the deluded parents had been for a long series of years in the habit of destroying their female infants as soon as they were born. Whether the custom was sanctioned by the shastras or not, is irrelevent; it is enough that it was deeply rooted in the practice and prejudices of the natives. These unnatural murders at length attracted the attention of Government, and *they were abolished by an order of the supreme power.* Did Government immediately lose the confidence and attachment of the natives? Not one symptom of disaffection has been manifested by the natives on this account.

From time immemorial it was the custom of mothers to sacrifice their children to the Ganges at the annual festival held at Gunga Saugur. The British Government regarded the practice with those feelings of horror which such unnatural murders are calculated to inspire; as persuasion would have been unavailing with those who had parted

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* See Friend of India, (quar. ser.) No. iii. March, 1821. † Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 13.

with every parental feeling, *the practice was prohibited by a public regulation, and the prohibition enforced by public authority.* This order was promulgated in the presence of thousands assembled at a public festival, in the highest excitement of superstitious frenzy. What was the consequence? Not one instance of resistance was attempted by that immense crowd—the mischief vanished from the earth, and no one bewailed it! The mothers who had brought their children to this funeral sacrifice, were constrained to carry them back unhurt; and many, perhaps to whom the heinousness of the crime had never appeared, were, by this interposition, awakened to a sense of its enormity.

"The Hindoo laws absolutely prohibit the execution of a Brahmun; they forbid the Magistrate even to imagine evil against him. Thus fenced by the laws, and extolled by their sacred books, they are still more powerfully guarded by the respect and veneration of the people. When our Government commenced in the East we were reduced to the most serious dilemma. To have inflicted punishment on Brahmuns would have been to violate the most awful sanctions of Hindoo law, and the dearest prejudices of the people; to have exempted them from punishment would have been to deliver over the country to desolation, ravage, and murder. The reign of equity which we were about to introduce, was stopped at the threshold; the destiny of millions hung in suspense. How did we act on this occasion? Did we lay the laws of justice at the feet of the sacred tribe? Did we abrogate our code of jurisprudence, and adopt the Vedas for our guide? Did we deprive the country of our protection, because the Hindoo shastras forbid the punishment of the aggressors, if they happen to be Brahmuns? We did not hesitate a single moment, but boldly stepped forward in vindication of the rights of society; and in spite of a formidable phalanx of Hindoo juris-consults, and of the strongest prejudices, caused these delinquents to pay the forfeit of their lives to the laws of offended justice. Have the natives complained of this outrage on the sanctity of their priesthood, or considered it as an infringement of our toleration? Have they, in any one instance, petitioned us to disregard their welfare and exempt their spiritual guides from death? or have they not on the contrary tacitly sanctioned every act of punishment, and applauded the inflexible tenor of our proceedings? Let any man read the account of Nundkomar's execution in Calcutta, forty years ago, and he will be convinced that Hindoos are not men to complain of *the execution of justice, even though it happen to infringe their laws and prejudices.* Mr. Hastings judged there could be no danger in his execution; and his judgment proved correct. If ever it might have been expected that public feeling would have manifested itself against us, it was most assuredly in this instance, when, for the first time, we were carrying the law into execution against one of this sacred tribe; where the actors in this unprecedented exhibition of justice were but a handful compared with the immense crowd (full 200,000 of his own countrymen!) which surrounded the scaffold; that vast crowd returned peaceably to their houses. If Mr. Hasting's intrepid support of the claims of justice, in the face of such formidable obstacles, should continue to encourage others, and thereby prove a lasting benefit to the

natives of India, more solid glory will inscribe his memory than if we had covered the plains of India with obelisks."*

The opinion of J. H. Harrington, Esq. officiating chief Judge in the Nizamut Adawlut, Calcutta, on the expediency of abolishing the Suttee, has been given. The second Judge, C. Smith, Esq. says;—"The practice of Suttee OUGHT TO BE ABOLISHED, and it may be abolished with PERFECT SAFETY." The third Judge, J. T. Shakespear, Esq. likewise states:—"I am prepared to concur in a recommendation to Government, that a regulation be promulgated prohibiting Suttees throughout the country." The fifth Judge, W. B. Martin, Esq. at the same time stated:—"The toleration of the practice by our Government, and its disposition to interfere no further than was necessary to guard it from abuse, has been misconstrued into a tacit recognition of the principle of an usage, the legality of which, within certain limits, it has formerly acknowledged."

The minute of the officiating Judge, J. Ahmuty, Esq. relative to the documents from which the above extracts are taken, is as follows:—"I feel satisfied that it would be far preferable to enact a regulation *prohibiting the practice of Suttees at once, and rendering it punishable by law*, than having recourse to any partial or indirect means to repress it gradually, if even such a result could be reasonably expected to ensue."†

The Governor General in Council, Lord Amherst, evidently anticipates the final abolition of Suttee, as appears from the observations upon the statement of the number of widows who were burned in 1823. His words are:—"His Lordship in Council is unwilling to abandon the hope, that the abolition of the practice may, at a future period, be found safe and expedient; and he has already had occasion to remark, that the more general dissemination of knowledge and the discussions of the question among the better informed Hindoos themselves, may be expected to have some effect in gradually preparing the minds of the natives for such a measure."‡ (Jud. Depart. Dec. 1824.)

Humanity, in her tears, asks, why delay to rescue the unhappy widows? "The argument that we may ultimately look for the cure of this evil in the gradual increase of intelligence which is beginning to develope itself in India, might have some weight, if the progress of intelligence were of a more accelerated character than circumstances allow us to suppose, or if the immediate abolition of the rite were not proved to be both safe and practicable. But this fact, once satisfactorily established, to delay the enjoyment of an acknowledged good, because at some future, yet more remote time, we anticipate its attainment by the operation of other causes,—what is this but to procrastinate a happiness already within our reach, and to be justly responsible for all the misery of the intervening period of a long and criminal delay?"§

The Magistrate of Poona, under the Bombay Presidency, (Captain

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 22—24.—Friend of India, as above. † Par. Papers, Vol, iv. p. 148, 149. ‡ p. 153.

§ See Grimshawe's Appeal to British Humanity in behalf of Hindoo widows, p. 26—28.

H. D. Robertson,) thus states the nature of the popular feeling relative to Suttees:—" The feeling, I might almost say, *is general to stop them;* it was hinted to me, through various respectable channels, that although a show of discontent would be exhibited, an order of Government to prevent their continuance would be a palatable measure."*

Another Magistrate in Bombay, (J. Barnard. Esq.) declares:—" The circumstances under which Suttees prevail, the classes interested therein, the number of instances, and the conduct of the community in their communications, both with the Magistrate and with each other, on such occasions, as well as the impressions generally entertained by those not concerned, convince me that there are few cases in which *evil would ensue from prohibition and coercive prevention.*"†

Colonel Dow, in his History of Hindostan, says;—"All religions must be tolerated in Bengal except the practice of *some inhuman customs which the Mahomedans have already, in a great measure, destroyed.* There are particular usages, established by time into a law, which *our humanity must destroy.* Let no women burn themselves with their husbands, no dying person being exposed by his friends. To leave the natives entirely to their own laws would be to consign them to anarchy and confusion."‡ Vol. iii. p. 128, 143.

" The Commentaries of Bras de Albuquerque, the son of the Great Albuquerque, one of those extraordinary men who, nearly three hundred years ago, raised to the highest pitch of glory the Portuguese name in India, contains the following passage:—" When Alf. de Albuquerque took the kingdom of Goa he would not permit that any woman thence forward should burn herself; and although to change their custom is equal to death, nevertheless they rejoiced in life, and said great good of him, because he commanded that they should not burn themselves. Long after his death, when a Moor or Hindoo had received wrong and could obtain no redress from the Governor, the aggrieved person would go to Goa, to Albuquerque's tomb, and make an offering of oil at the lamp which burned before it, and call upon him for justice."§ Wilberforce's Speech, 1813, 8vo. p. 93, 94.

The Rev. T. S. Grimshawe, in his valuable pamphlet, called, " An earnest Appeal to British Humanity in behalf of Hindoo Widows," (1825, Hatchard London,) refers to the suppression of Suttees by other powers.—" The Mogul Government has uniformly discountenanced the practice of burning widows alive; and the extent of the benefits thus conferred may be estimated by the remarkable fact that *in no part of Hindostan is the rite less known than under this sway; and in none is it more common than in that which is the centre of British power and ascendency!* This example was humanely followed by the Portuguese. The Dutch, the Danish, and the French Governments, uniformly refused to sanction the custom. Why is the name of Britain alone excluded from this honourable list of competitors? Is it that policy and duty in our case are irreconcilable, however blend-

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 167. † p. 209. ‡ " Collection of Facts and Opinions relative to the Burning of Hindoo Widows," by Dr. Johns, p. 89. § p. 103, 104.

ed in that of others? The conviction is most humiliating that *the British Government is the only European power in India that tolerates the practice of burning widows alive on the funeral pile! !*" Page 17, 18.

To the same effect is the following brief extract from the article in "The Friend of India," before noticed.—"The Mosulmans who never protected the unhappy natives from foreign invasion, or from internal commotion, checked this practice in many cases, and in some provinces abolished it altogether. Will it be too much for us while we dispense blessings with one hand, with the other to snatch the helpless victim from the flames? There is no instance on historic record in which acts of humanity have ever roused public indignation. Massacre, confiscation, and injustice are the elements from which revolutions are created,—not humanity, justice, and equity; the mere supposition is a novelty in political science."

The last Par. Papers on the burning of widows in India, printed May 17, 1827, contain additional information on the propriety and facility of abolishing this cruel rite. In this collection of Papers are some *proposed paragraphs* for Bengal in the judicial department, (p. 2—31,) containing a very lucid and powerful representation of the facility of abolishing Suttees. This important document was, on March 19, 1824, referred to the consideration of the Committee of Correspondence, but it does not appear, from the Papers now published, that it has been approved and sent to India. This copious and interesting document contains a comprehensive statement of the facts and correspondence contained in the Papers on Suttees in India, printed by the Hon. House of Commons. Its general publicity in Britain, and the adoption of its principles in India, is very desirable. The following short recapitulation gives a distinct and connected view of its contents and of the position established by it.—

1. "That the practice of Suttee is not founded in Hindoo law, and only recommended, but not enjoined in the shastras.

2. "That every other inhuman Hindoo practice has been prohibited under severe penalties under your Government, not only without resistance, but apparently without exciting disapprobation; although those practices had their support in what is certainly the main support of the practice of Suttee, namely, superstitious custom and prejudice.

3. "That your Government having contravened a fundamental principle of Hindoo law, held sacred by all Hindoos, by abolishing the impunity of Brahmuns, and making them amenable to the British laws, without its having been followed by any evil consequence, there can be no serious grounds for apprehending that the prohibiting a practice which *is not founded in Hindoo law, nor recognized by Hindoos in general, and prevailing only among certain tribes or castes of Hindoos, few in number compared with the mass of the population*, and the only object of which prohibition would be the protection of the wives and daughters of Hindoos from perishing in flames, would produce any serious opposition to British rule, or even a permanent dissatisfaction.

4. "That there is a great and acknowledged diversity of sentiment among the Hindoos on the subject of Suttees; that the practice chief-

ly, if not exclusively, prevails among the lowest and most ignorant, and is discountenanced by the upper educated classes, that even in Bengal, though prevalent in the vicinity of Calcutta, the practice is far from general, and in the extensive territories on the Madras side of India reaching from Cape Comorin to Orissa it is by no means general. That in some districts it is unknown, and in others of rare occurrence; and that in the territories subject to the Bombay Government, the prevalence of it is far from general; in some of its districts particularly in Guzerat, scarcely known; and that in the Concan, comprising the Mahratta countries conquered from the Peishwa, in which it was very prevalent, the people, on becoming subjects to the British rule, *voluntarily discontinued the practice, in consequence of understanding that it was repugnant to the British laws*, a fact which proves at least that in their attachment to the practice, enthusiasm had no share, and obviously points to the conclusion, that a public declaration confirming that impression, and announcing the punishment of death in whomsoever should assist at any of those ceremonies, would have been implicitly and quietly acquiesed in.

5. "That the practice was not permitted by the Foreign States when they had power and territory in India.

6. "And which we think conclusive of the practicability of abolishing the practice, or at least, of the safety with which it might be prohibited, that in many instances it has been prevented from taking place without exciting even a murmur, by either direct interference on the part of the local authority, or by refusal of permission, or by a procedure similar to that which was adopted by the criminal Judge of the Zillah of Masalipatam.*

"The officers who acted in these instances of prevention, it was well known, acted in virtue of the authority they held under Government. It might be considered that in each instance, an experiment was made as to the consequence of a prevention, and as not one of them appears to have been resisted, or even to have excited any feelings of dissatisfaction, we find it difficult to imagine that a general prohibition by the *Government itself* would be less efficacious, or produce any serious opposition or discontent. The very utmost we should apprehend from it would be temporary clamour or agitation among the lowest and most ignorant of the people in insulated districts, where the practice prevails, and where venal Brahmuns may have influence, but would be discountenanced and reprobated by the higher and more educated classes of the community.

7. "And lastly, is the equally satisfactory and important fact, that a great number of the most able and experienced servants of the Company employed under the immediate authority of your Government, and the Presidencies of Fort St. George and Bombay, in the stations which afford the best means of forming a correct judgment on the subject, including members of your court of Nizamut Adawlut and Superintendents of police, have voluntarily, and some of them nearly in the

* Threatening to commit as accomplices in the murder, all persons who should any way assist to destroy the woman.

same terms, recommended the abolition of the horrid practice, and recorded their confident opinions and belief, that it might be abolished without any evil consequence whatever."*

John Hudlestone and William Taylor Money, Esqrs. signed a dissent to the motion, referring the proposed paragraphs for Bengal, to the Committee of Correspondence, stating "As they could not possibly be productive of *harm*, we regret the *indefinite delay of any good* which the immediate adoption of them might eventually have produced, reflecting that *probably no day passes on which some victims are not sacrificed to the horrid practice in India, and more especially in the Bengal provinces*." They further observe, "However necessary the toleration of the horrid enormity alluded to in Mr. C. Grant's work, (written in 1792) might have been, when he so ardently deprecated its continuance, we think ample grounds are laid (in the proposed dispatch,) for doubting if that necessity any longer exists, and whether the British Government in India, with the power it now possesses, would find greater difficulty or danger in putting down the most revolting of all the Hindoo practices, than it experienced in prohibiting all their other, but less cruel practices, and especially in annulling the Hindoo law, which gave impunity to Brahmuns and making them, in common with the inferior casts, amenable to the British laws."†—(East India House, March, 31, 1824.)

The Judge of Moradabad in the returns of Suttees for 1824, after giving an account of the prevention of a Suttee, very forcibly declares, "This abomination is of unfrequent occurrence in this district, and might I think *be put down with the greatest ease and safety, by a simple prohibition*."‡

A. Sinclair, Esq. Assisting Magistrate at Combaconum, in a letter to the Magistrate of Tanjore, detailing the prevention of a Suttee, dated Jan. 15, 1825, thus closes his communication: "I take this opportunity to submit to your superior judgment and to the wisdom of Government, whether this melancholy practice *may not be stopped by authority*. I believe that a proclamation against such shocking rites would be almost universally hailed with satisfaction; in fact, the hurried and unauthorized manner in which the deed is occasionally effected, shows that the perpetrators are aware of the horrible nature of the act, and that they fear the interposition of power may prevent the commission of such atrocities."§

The Rev. T. Thompson late Chaplain in Calcutta, thus expresses his convictions of the propriety and safety of the abolition of Suttees, Feb. 1827. "Of the practicability of the abolition of these Sacrifices with the most perfect safety,—without the interception of the peace of the country for a moment—and even with the thanks of multitudes I have not the least doubt. It is a great mistake to say that this is one of the deep rooted general customs of the country, which on that account it would be dangerous to meddle with. It has been voluntarily discontinued over a very large part of India. As to the *practicability* of abolishing the custom, there is I believe but one opinion with well informed persons. Nothing would be easier. The Government has only to frame a regulation prohibiting the

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* Par. Papers. Vol. v. p. 29, 30. † p. 33, 34. ‡ p. 111. § p. 130.

practice under proper penalties—the highest penalties—and the local Magistrate would then be empowered to act. I do not apprehend the smallest political risk and this I know to be the opinion of some of the ablest and most experienced Magistrates in Bengal. I could have wished the odious practice were abolished by the Government *there;* but as this is hopeless, it will rejoice my heart to find it done by authority from *home.*"*

The late Rev. W. Ward of Serampore, in a letter to the present Earl Claredon says; "I cannot refrain from giving it as my decided opinion, that this dreadful practice might easily be abridged and finally abolished by the British Government, without creating any alarm among the Hindoos."

Dr. Marshman expresses the same opinion; "It is only for the British Government to say—*the murder of your widows is contrary to reason and revolting to humanity—We forbid it,* and the practice will cease without giving birth to the slightest tumult. Forty years after the prohibition, our Indian Empire will be found, as far as this interference could effect it, equally unimpaired in its vigour and more deeply fixed in the enlightened attachment of its subjects."†

In reviewing the annual statement of Suttees, in the Zillahs and Cities of India presented to the Government, while it is distressing to see with what frequency, indifference, and brutality, the unhappy widow is hurried to the pile, it is grateful *to see humanity sometimes triumph, and the infatuated victim rescued;* affording demonstration how easily—

"*One mild effort* of the conquering hand
Might free the earth from this detested blot,
And lead in blest religion to withstand
By her meek precepts, what has dimm'd the lot
Of man, and wrought such deeds as cannot be forgot."

The efforts to discountenance the perpetration of Suttees under the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay have been attended with great encouragement, and show the facility of entirely suppressing this *unnatural and murderous rite.* According to the return of Suttees for the Madras Presidency, from 1817 to 1819, the number was 183; from 1821—1823 no returns, average per annum sixty-one.

Under the Bombay Presidency, from 1819 to 1823, 245, average per annum 49. Who can doubt whether these few individuals, sacrificed every year, could not be saved in those extensive territories without exciting the least commotion! Nor is the evil under the Bengal Presidency (containing probably a population of 50,000,000,) so great as to deter exertions for its suppression, the number of Suttees being, from 1819—1823, 3059, average per annum 611.‡ Might not British humanity, magnanimity, and piety, rescue these without the least danger to the state? The multitude of counsellors reply in the affirmative.

In the Bareilly Division it is reported, that in 1815 three women

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* Poynder's Speech. 182—185. † p. 184. ‡ Account of the York Meeting for the Suppression of Suttees, p. 24. Jackson's Speech, p. 24.

were prevented becoming Suttees. In the Patna Division, in 1817, twenty-five Suttees took place, but five women were prevented who "were saved from burning by the interference of the people of the village or by the arrival of the Police Officers." In the same year five Suttees are stated to have been prevented in the City of Benares. In the following year three other Suttees were prevented in the same City, and "one woman, cast a Brahmun, ran away from the pile after it was set fire to, and is still living." Four widows were saved at Cuddapah in 1820.*

The Magistrate of the Patna Division, in his returns of Suttees for 1822, writes,—"It is with satisfaction that I have noted, at the foot of the report, that TWELVE WIDOWS have been either prevented or dissuaded from becoming Suttees; in nine of which they were dissuaded by the Police Officers; in one the widow was prevented by a Police Officer on account of a legal impediment, and in the two remaining cases the widows were dissuaded, in one by the Zemindar of the village, and in the other by her friends. A Police Officer was present in only one of the numerous cases in which the sacrifice was completed (and in that he should have prevented it!) although, as it may be observed, many of the villages in which they took place are not far from the police stations."

In the returns from the same Division of the following year (1823) are the following highly interesting statements:—"It will probably be considered the most remarkable feature of the present report that, on *nine occasions* of intended Suttee, at which alone the Police Officers had an opportunity of being present, *they succeeded, without difficulty or opposition, in dissuading the widows from sacrificing themselves.* From the inquiries that I have been able to make on the subject of Suttees during the last two years, I do not hesitate to offer an opinion, that in this District it would not be attended with any dissatisfaction of a dangerous nature, if the Government should deem it proper, *to prohibit this lamentable custom altogether;* it even appears to me that the inhabitants of the district generally are prepared to hear of such a prohibition."† When shall suffering humanity in India hear the voice of mercy saying, kindle those horrid fires no more! In some parts of Orissa a pit is used for this dreadful sacrifice, and the woman, after circumambulating it three or seven times, throws herself into the fire. I have seen one of these pits at Juggernaut's temple, in May 1824, but did not hear of the Suttee in time to be present. Even from this pit the Suttee sometimes escapes. In the Par. Papers (printed July, 1825, p. 109 and 150) is the following account:—"Rahang in the Thannah, of Pooree, (Juggernaut) died Aug. 25, 1823, and his widow, Mussumut Munee, aged 50, declared her intentions of becoming a Suttee, and repeated the declaration in the presence of the Police Officers. In pursuance of this intention, the day following she went through the usual ceremonies, and *threw herself into a burning pit, where the body of her husband was consuming,* but almost immediately leapt out and made her escape. She was severely but not

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. and v. p. 22—24. † Vol. iv. p. 122.

dangerously burnt, and an engagement was taken from the managers of the village binding themselves that she should be taken care of and proper remedies applied. She returned to her family, and was received by them as usual."

The Par. Papers of May 17, 1827, contain various references to the prevention of Suttees, which show the facility of the entire suppression of the custom.

Mr. W. Brooke, Collector at Shahabad, in 1789, refused his consent to a widow's burning herself on application made to him. But no bad consequences followed. In 1805, Mr. J. R. Elphinstone, Magistrate of Behar, prevented a Suttee, *a girl of twelve years of age!* He was afterwards "given to understand that the girl and her friends were extremely grateful for his interposition." Mr. Hodgson, Magistrate of Midnapore, and the Magistrate of Goruckpore, in 1817, prevented Suttees; and it is added, "in both cases the intended Suttees were *eighteen years of age*." Mr. W. Bird, Magistrate of Benares, in 1815, prevented two women from destroying themselves. He observes; "both these Suttees were prevented by means of force; and by this means no less than *five Suttees* have been prevented within the space of two years at this place, without the slightest inconvenience resulting from it."* Mr. J. Haig, Acting Judge in the Zillah Tinnevelly, in 1819, writes; "I am confident that the people are aware that the practice will never be sanctioned by the Magistrate, and am happy that the accompanying documents enable me to afford a proof of the successful interposition of authority on a late occasion, in preventing the immolation of two females of high rank."† The Magistrate of Burdwan writes, under date Feb. 15, 1825; "I have much satisfaction in mentioning that Mussumaut Lookmae Debba was prevailed upon to refrain from her intention of burning with the dead body of her husband."‡

A Regulation prohibiting *the burying a widow alive* was promulgated Sep. 1817, which appears peculiarly interesting, as indicating the influence of the British Government in India. It is as follows:—

1. "It having been ascertained that the Shastra contains no authority for a practice which has prevailed amongst the Jogee tribe in some parts of the country, especially in the district of Tipperah, of burying alive the widows of persons of that tribe who desire to be interred with the bodies of their deceased husbands, such practice must necessarily be regarded as a criminal offence under the general Laws and Regulations of Government.

2. "The Magistrates and Police Officers, in every district where the practice abovementioned has been known to exist, shall be careful to make the present prohibition as publicly known as possible; and if any person after being advised of it, shall appear to have been concerned in burying a woman alive in opposition thereto, he shall be apprehended and brought to trial for the offence before the Court of Circuit.

3. "The Magistrates and Police Officers are further directed to use all practicable means for preventing any such illegal act: and an attempt to commit the same, after the promulgation of these Rules, though not carried completely into effect, will, on conviction, be punishable by the City Magistrate, or by the Court of Circuit, according to the degree of criminality and circumstance of the case." Mis. Register, Dec. 1824.—How long ere a similar Regulation abolishes the awfully prevalent practice of burning widows alive!

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* Vol v. p. 18, 19. † p. 28. ‡ p. 63.

Friendship prompts me to record here the rescue of a poor woman from the flaming pit at Pooree, and this event, like the preceding, shows, "while rescuing one, how practicable it is, with ease, to rescue all." The account is contained in the Report of the General Baptist Missionary Society for 1826, and is as follows:—

"On Friday, Oct. 28, 1825, we were informed that there would be a Suttee in the afternoon. Mr. B. wrote to the different Europeans at the stations, thinking that some might wish to attend, but no hope could be entertained of saving the poor woman, as we were told that she had already burnt her fingers to prove her fortitude. Mr. B. declined going, having seen one Suttee, and being so disgusted at the horrid scene;—and from what he then saw, feeling persuaded it was in vain to attempt to save the wretched victim, he despaired of doing any good. I felt a desire to witness the horrid work, that I might speak from experience; and two military gentlemen having expressed their determination to go, at about half-past four we set off towards the spot where the Suttee was to take place: the name of the place is Swerga Dwar, or the Gate of Heaven; a place thickly strewed with human skulls and skeletons of Juggernaut's worshippers. About a furlong from the pit we ascertained, from the noise of the tin kettle-drums, &c. that the woman was approaching. In a few minutes a vast concourse of people made their appearance, shouting and beating their drums, &c. even little children were employed in this unholy work. In the centre of a crowd we discerned the destined victim, surrounded by a slight hoop of bamboo, so that she might walk clear from the press. She appeared to be under twenty years of age, and of an interesting appearance. Round her person was wrapped a white cloth smeared with turmeric; under her right arm she carried a handy, or earthen pot, containing a little rice, a piece of cocoanut, one or two other trifling things, and some fire to throw into the pit; this was from Juggernaut's temple: in her left hand she held some pice (halfpence) which she was to distribute to the bystanders. Her jet-black hair was smeared with ghee and other greasy substances, and decorated with flowers and gaudy ornamented paper: round her neck was a large rope nearly as thick as the wrist, and one or two smaller ones: thus attired, she looked the picture of all that is degraded and wretched. Before her stood a Brahmun, with two paltry pictures of Juggernaut, which he was very anxious she should look upon continually. Altogether, I never saw any thing so infernal. The barbarous indifference of the multitude to every feeling of humanity—the thoughts of an awful eternity—the idea that the poor creature before me would soon rush, thus polluted with Idolatry, into the presence of an awful God, who hates sin and abominates Idolatry—the multitude who evinced so savage a pleasure in the bloody work—and the malicious countenances of the principal actors in this wretched scene, rendered more horrible than ever by the interruption, altogether so pressed upon my mind that the feeling beggars description. But what could be done! something must be attempted. We bid the people stop. I got off my horse, and the two Europeans came near with their elephant: I made my way to the woman, and found she was quite intoxicated; there was a strange wildness in her appearance. I looked at her eyes, turned up the eyelids and found them very bloodshot and heavy: the woman could not utter a syllable distinctly, all that could be understood was, 'Juggernaut,' and 'koosee,' meaning, I suppose, Juggernaut is my pleasure. A thrill of horror ran through my veins: her youth—her destitute condition, for she had not a friend even to 'give her fire,' viz. light the pile—her total insensibility—and the general horror of the scene, induced the mutual feeling that she was about to be cruelly murdered. We thought the law protected us under such circumstances, and determined to rescue her. The people looked at us amazed; the crowd soon thickened upon us, and assumed rather a formidable appearance; but there was no time for parley, we put on a determined aspect, and insisted on her being taken back, urging that she was quite intoxicated: this many of them admitted, but still retained their hold of the hoop by which she was enclosed, and urged that it was her wish to burn, and that it was Juggernaut's pleasure; we however insisted upon her being taken back till she was sensible. Captain G. and Lieutenant M. behaved nobly, they charged a few servants in their employ to keep off the people; they soon gave way without making any further resistance, and left us in charge of the woman and the principal actors. I should observe that the Daroga (head Police Officer) was absent. I then mounted my horse and rode before, the road was made through the crowd by the servants and a few seapoys, (soldiers) who attended as lookers on, the Officers followed the woman on their elephant till they saw all was safe, and then returned to the pile. I rode before the crowd and the woman towards the Police Officer's place of confinement;

in my way I met with Mr. B. and surprised him with what was done. He accompanied me to the prison, and delivered the woman into the charge of the Daroga, who was much surprised and disconcerted at what was done, but was obliged to attend to Captain G.'s orders to secure the woman. All seemed consternation. I am sure I wondered at our success, Bampton seemed to wonder more; the people seemed thunder-struck, and exclaimed, 'Now you have done something!' others said, 'This is merciful!' *Among the thousands of spectators not a sound of disapprobation was heard, or the least confusion excited.* The woman herself kept saying, as well as we could understand, 'This is well done! you have broken my purposes:' she was however quite stupified. What may be the result we know not, or whether we shall be able to save her is quite uncertain; we know, however, it might be done with the most trifling interference on the part of the Magistrate. Her husband's corpse is already consumed."

He adds,—"On Tuesday the Judge, much to his credit, determined that the woman *should not burn.* May God overrule it to promote his own glory, and for the putting out for ever these flames which hell itself has kindled. O that this circumstance may be the harbinger of this happy consummation! How easily might it be done! Only think, that three individuals, at the very worst place in all India, without authority, without the least disturbance, and without giving offence to any except three or four individuals immediately concerned, have succeeded in saving this wretched woman from the devouring flames!"

If so much satisfaction is felt by humane minds in the rescue of a single individual, how would humanity—how would Christianity hail the merciful suppression of all these barbarities!

Before the late Marquis of Hastings left India, in Jan. 1823, the following *"Supplicatory Lines"* were addressed to him, in a Calcutta Paper. They are expressive of the public opinion in India upon the subject of Suttees.

"Ere thy benignant power retires
From India, bless'd beneath thy care,
O quench these foul unhallow'd fires,
Which hell's own flame has kindled there,
The stain of earth and upper air!
Then o'er the sea,
The orphan's blessing and the widow's prayer
Shall follow thee.
O ne'er to man has pitying Heaven
A power so blest, so glorious given,
Say but a single word and save
Ten thousand mothers from a flaming grave,
And tens of thousands from the source of woe,
That ever must to orphan'd children flow!
Save from the flame the infant's place of rest,
The couch by nature given—a mother's breast;
O bid the mother live—the babe caress her,
And sweeter still its hoping accents bless her.
India with tearful eye and bended knee,
Hastings, her lord and judge, presents her plaint to thee."

Britain speak.—"Plead for the widow."—Let petitions pour into Parliament from every quarter, which, like the streams of the sanctuary, shall quench these dreadful fires. Let the rulers of India, who hold its destinies in their hands, hear the appeal of a writer in that country:—"Let us freely look at the practicability of its abolition, and number both its friends and its foes. We may calculate on the support of all the humane, the wise, and the good, throughout India! we may depend on the great majority of the people who have prevented every village in India from being lighted up monthly with these infernal fires. Those who used all their influence to liberate their country from the stigma of this guilt, by preventing their mothers and sisters from ascending the funeral pile, will undoubtedly sup-

port us in discountenancing the practice. We shall enlist on our side all those tender feelings which, though now dormant, will then be aroused into new vigour; but above all we shall surround ourselves with the protection of that Almighty Power, whose command is, 'Thou shalt do no murder;' who defends the weak and succours the injured; who, when the cries of oppressed India had pierced His throne, selected us of all other nations to break its chains and restore it to happiness."*

SECTION VII.

A collection of European and Native testimony to the position that the Suttee is not absolutely enjoined by the Hindoo shastras, and hence should be suppressed—methods proposed for its abolition—concluding appeal.

Sir W. Jones, in his translation of the Institutes of Menu, the great Indian Legislator, thus describes the work:—"This system of duties, religious and civil, and of law in all its branches, the Hindoos firmly believe to have been promulgated in the beginning of time by Menu, son or grandson of Brahma, or in plain language, the first of created beings, and not the oldest only, but the holiest of Legislators." His high character is thus described in the beginning of the work:—"Menu sat reclined, with his attention fixed on one object, the supreme God; when the divine sages approached him, and after mutual salutations in due form, delivered the following address, 'Deign sovereign ruler, to apprize us of the sacred laws in their order, as they must be followed by all the classes, and by each of them, in their several degrees, together with the duties of every mixed class; for thou, lord, and thou only among mortals, knowest the true sense, the first principle, and the prescribed ceremonies, of this universal, supernatural Veda, unlimited in extent, and unequalled in authority.'" After a careful perusal of this work, not the slightest reference to the horrid custom of the Suttee has been found. It contains various laws relative to women; a few extracts, in addition to what has been already quoted, may be interesting:—"In his passage to the next world, neither his father, nor his mother, *nor his wife*, nor his son, nor his kinsmen, will remain in his company: his virtue alone will adhere to him. When he leaves his corse, like a log or a lump of clay, on the ground, his kindred retire with averted faces: but his virtue accompanies his soul. Equal care must be taken of women without sons, of women without kindred, of *widows* true to their lords, &c. A widow who, from a wish to bear children, slights her deceased husband, by marrying again, brings disgrace on herself here below, and shall be excluded from the seat of her lord. Like those abstemious men (unmarried Brahmuns) a virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if, after the decease of her lord, she devote herself to pious austerity."† The duty of Hindoo widows is evidently a life of austere devotion till death, and the custom of Suttee is unknown in the Institutes of the great Indian Legislator.

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* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 26. † Sir W. Jones' Works, Vol. vii. p. 240, 334, 271.

The following extracts from the Parliamentary Papers, showing that the Suttee is not positively enjoined, and should be suppressed, according to the opinion of many Europeans high in office in India, appear very important.—

"We really think there is as little justification for a woman to burn herself with the remains of her deceased husband, as for a rajkoomor to destroy his daughters at their birth; burying alive for the leprosy where the party is desirous to die; human sacrifices at Saugur; putting sorcerers to death, or killing a human creature by any other means, without justification or excuse: *all of which are made capital offences by the Regulations.* The killing in all these instances has quite as much in its favour, (on the score of prejudice and superstition,) as the practice of Suttee: but we do not find the punishment of death denounced against these crimes, has at all been considered by the people as an infringement of that complete toleration, in matters of religion, which it has been a fundamental principle of the British Government to allow. *And there can be no doubt that the practice of Suttee might be as easily prevented throughout the British Territories as any of the murderous practices above referred to.*"* (E. Watson, Esq. Judge, Allypore, April, 1818.)

"The suicide in these cases is not indeed a religious act, nor *has it the sanction of Menu and other ancient legislators revered by the Hindoos.* On the contrary, Menu declares that a virtuous wife ascends to heaven, though she have no child, if after the decease of her lord she devote herself to pious austerity.† The texts of Yama and Catyayana, quoted in the *Vivada Bhangarnana* (digest of Hindoo law), "On the duties of widows choosing to survive their husbands" are also to the same effect;‡ and Vrihaspate adds§ "whether she ascends the pile, or survive for the benefit of her husband, she is a faithful wife." Some authors have condemned the suicide of widows altogether, as coming within a general prohibition against the wilful abridgment of human life: and proceeding from a desire of future sensual enjoyment, in preference to the more pure and perfect state of beatitude promised for a life of virtue and piety."‖ (Govt. Regulations relative to Suttees). Referring to these Regulations it is remarked:—"It is trusted they will have a beneficial influence, by lessening a sense of obligation under which there is reason to believe many are induced to make this sacrifice of their lives, and showing that *the practice is far from being inculcated as such by the most approved authorities of the Hindoo law.*"¶ (J. Adam, Esq. Sec. to the Governor General, Oct. 1817.)

"I submit that *it has little or no connection with their religion!* The practice is strongly recommended by the shastras, but nothing more, and Menu (with other authorities of great respectability,) prescribes the duties of a widow, without *hinting* that burning herself is one of the most important. In permitting, or indeed *authorizing* Suttees, we are by no means showing a proper forbearance to the religious customs, or long established prejudices of the Hindoos; *an act no where enjoined by any of the shastras;* on the contrary a crime which their own laws would punish with death; and only tolerated by our Government because we overlook the impudent imposition which has transformed a *recommendation* to the

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* Papers, Vol. i. p. 99. † Text 141, "Digest of Hindoo Law," book 4, ch. 3. sec 2. ‡ Texts, 144, 145, "Digest of Hindoo Law." § Text 130. ‖ p. 126. ¶ p. 147.

widow to accompany her husband, into *an order*, which the relations must carry into effect if she should evince symptoms of disobedience. I cannot attempt to account for the great prevalence of Suttees in some districts and the rarity of them in others; but it is a proof that it is a custom seldom thought of in the greater proportion of our dominions."* "Menu and the most ancient and respectable writers *do not mention Suttee:* it was therefore in their time either unknown or not approved. If known, but not mentioned, because not approved by Menu, the authority of the modern shastra is not sufficient to give any merit to the sacrifice. In the first case we do not find that *the practice originates in law, but the law is the consequence of the practice.* Sacred authority is subsequently produced to enforce the merit of an act originating on the mortal feelings of affection, grief, despair, or some other passion of the mind equally incapable of affording a hope that it could be acceptable in the eyes of the Deity."† (W. Ewer, Esq. Sup. of Police, Calcutta, Jan. 1819.)

"Having attended several Suttees, for the purpose of gaining as much information as possible on the subject, and having attentively considered the doctrines under which it is sanctioned, the circumstances attending the performance of the sacrifice, and the terms upon which those who have been prevented from burning have lived with their relations and neighbours, I am decidedly of opinion that *the abolition of the practice by law would not be attended with any evil consequences:* on the contrary I think the enactment of such a law is dictated by every principle of humanity; nor does it appear to me that the abolition of the practice is altogether inconsistent with the spirit of toleration which has ever distinguished the British Government. The greater proportion of the men are unable to give a reason for the performance of the sacrifice, and it is surely fair to infer that the women are not better informed on the subject; and therefore to suppose that the resolution to become Suttees cannot proceed so much from their having reasoned themselves into a conviction of the purity of the act itself, as from a kind of infatuation produced by the absurdities poured into their ears by ignorant Brahmuns, most of whom, if asked, would be found unable to give a reason for the doctrines they inculcate. I am persuaded that *ninety-nine* out of *a hundred women* sacrifice themselves more under the influence of this infatuation than from any conviction of their own minds."‡ (E. Molony, Esq. Mag. Burdwan, Dec. 1818.)

"It was the prevalent opinion amongst the natives that this sacrifice would not be tolerated by the British Government."§ (S. Marriott, Esq. Tannah, Sept. 1819.)

V. Hale, Esq. Judge in the Southern Concan, (Oct. 1819,) thus shows the state of public opinion relative to the Suttee in that part of India—"I was much gratified on finding on my arrival in this part of the Concan, that the ceremony of Suttee, at no time so commonly practised as in most parts of British India, had, *on the institution of the Hon. Company's Government entirely ceased,* apparently caused by a very general opinion which prevailed among the natives, that the performance of this sacrifice was totally repugnant to the laws, as well as the feeling of Government; in short,—*that it would not be permitted.* This sentiment, particularly as no specific rules at that period existed

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* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 228, † p. 231. ‡ p. 236. § p. 258.

for the guidance of Magistrates, and as no bad effect apparently was the result of it, I did not most certainly take the smallest pains to remove; contenting myself, in the very few instances where my permission was applied for, by neither giving nor withholding my consent, declaring, as was then literally the case, that I was ignorant whether the usage was permitted by the Government or not. The state of doubt in which these evasive answers left the minds of the applicants, I found had all the effect I could have hoped for, and in a very short time I heard no more of them: the result being that in the bounds of the late Malwan residency *not a single case of Suttee has ever occurred;* at least not in my time: and I believe I am correct when I add, neither within the four years my predecessor was stationed there; if there has it must have been performed with such secrecy as to preclude the possibility of its coming to the knowledge of the local authorities.*"

"I feel emboldened, in the cause of humanity, to state, that the practice (of Suttee) *is neither prescribed by the shastra, nor encouraged by persons of education or influence.* I can speak, from positive authority, that his Highness the Rajah of Tanjore, has ever discouraged it; and I feel assured that, with the exception of a few Brahmuns, who derive a nefarious reward for presiding at this infernal rite, the prohibition of the practice would give universal satisfaction."+ (C. M. Lushington, Esq. Mag. at Combaconum, Sept. 1813.)

We could, with no consistency declare that to be murder to day, which we yesterday declared to be justifiable, and I do not think we can ever do so until we are armed with law opinions, that the practice of Suttees is not conformable to the Hindoo law: *and it by no means seems certain that such a construction of the law would be unattainable.*"‡ (W. Leycester, Esq. Chief Judge of the Nizamut Adawlut, Calcutta, May, 1821.)

C. Smith, Esq. second Judge in Calcutta, unequivocally declares his convictions of the necessity of suppressing this custom. "My opinion is, that *the toleration of the practice of Suttee is a reproach to our Government, and that the entire and immediate abolition of it would be attended with no sort of danger.* I would suggest a short regulation on the subject, somewhat in the style of the regulation against the sacrifice of children at Saugur.—Whereas the practice of Suttee is shocking to humanity and contrary to nature; and whereas the British Government, after the most careful inquiry, and the most mature consideration, feels it impossible to be satisfied that this commission, of self-murder, can ever be in truth the voluntary and unbiassed act of the female who is sacrificed; and whereas to interfere with a vigorous hand for the protection of the weak against the strong, of the simple against the artful classes of its subjects, is one of the most imperious and paramount duties of every civilized state; a duty from which it cannot shrink without a manifest diminution of its dignity, and an essential degradation of its character among nations, &c. &c.§ (May, 25, 1821.)

* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 258.—Account of York Meeting p. 26. + Vol. i. p. 270.
‡ Vol. ii. p. 63. § p. 63.

"The ordinances of Menu, which are one of the principal law authorities in this part of India, do not encourage the sacrifice in the same manner as others quoted in the Vivade Changamana, translated by Mr. Colebrook. 'Let him not wish for death! Let him not wish for life! Let him expect his appointed time, as a hired servant expects his wages,' are doctrines more agreeable to the Institutes of the oldest Hindoo legislator, who mentions doctrines very averse from self-immolation of widows; such as the raising up a son to the deceased by the widow. Here the marriage of widows is now deemed illegal, but not so in some of the most southern parts of the Peninsula. The Hindoo shastra lays down rules for securing proper provision for the widow, and confidence on the uninterrupted validity of such claims has probably proved, as a solace to their afflictions, one of the most efficacious considerations to the prevention of the practice; while the persuasion which the priesthood use to widows to induce them to devote their bodies to this sacrifice, have the greatest influence on those *who, being without future protection and maintenance*, regard a future sojourn in this world with despair."* (S. Newnham, Esq. Cuddapah, April, 1820.)

"I look upon this inhuman practice as one tolerated to the disgrace of the British Government; *it is ever abominated by the better sort of natives themselves, and no where is it enjoined by Hindoo law.* The authorities against self-immolation are Menu, Bhooraspattee, and several others. The weight of authority is in favour of a rigid practice of austerities, because it is that prescribed by Menu, revered by the Hindoos as the first and greatest law of authority. *Custom* can only be legally upheld when it does not militate against *law*, '*consuetudo pro lege servator*,' will only extend to cases where no specific law exists. In the present instance there is a specific law, sanctioned by Menu, in direct opposition to authorities of inferior weight. I apprehend, the obvious absurdity of the law (exempting Brahmuns from death) and the impossibility of reconciling it with our notions of justice induced its abolition. If then a *law* can be repealed from its inconsonancy with reason, the same arguments exist in a stronger degree against an inhuman, barbarous, and unjust custom."† (C. M. Lushington, Esq. Mag. Trichinopoly, Oct. 1819.)

The Hon. Court of Directors, in a letter addressed to the Governor General in Council, at Fort William, Bengal, dated London, June 17, 1823, thus expressed their views of the obligatory nature of Suttee, and the means of its abolition:—"Connected with the opinions expressed by many intelligent men, that *the practice of Suttee is not a tenet of religion to which the people are enthusiastically attached, but rather an abuse, fostered by interested priests and relations.* These instances of partial success do lead us to regard the notion of *prohibition*, modified according to circumstances, of this barbarous custom with rather less apprehension than it has generally produced. Assuredly the most acceptable form of success would be that which would be brought about by such an increase of intelligence among the peo-

* Par. Papers, Vol. ii. p. 98. † p. 103, 104.

ple as should show them the wickedness and absurdity of the practice; next to this, we should rejoice to see the abolition effected by the influence and the co-operation of the higher order of natives."* It is gratifying to see this awfully interesting subject discussed by every class of society, and there can be no doubt that the abolition of the Suttee would be hailed in India as an act expected from the British Government, and reflecting lustre upon its administration.

J. H. Harington, Esq. in a paper addressed to the Right Hon. the President of the Board of Control, under date May 30, 1822, observes, "Whatever opinion may be entertained on the policy which has hitherto induced the British Government to tolerate the immolation of Hindoo widows, as considered to be in some degree a religious observance, *although it is not a prescribed duty*, as may be seen in Mr. H. Colebrook's Translation of Original Texts on the subject, (see Vol. iv. of the Transactions of the Asiatic Society,) there can be no sufficient or legitimate reason for permitting a practice so repugnant to every feeling and principle of humanity, *in opposition to the only laws which can be pleaded in justification of it.*"†

The following statement is from T. H. Pelly, Esq. Magistrate of the Southern Concan, to the Governor in Council, Bombay, dated May 11, 1820:—"Happening to be at Penn, in Dec. it was reported to me, late in the day, that a woman was about to perform the ceremony of a Suttee. Some respectable Brahmuns were sent for, and after in vain endeavouring to persuade them from persevering in their design, they were told that if they could show *any passage* in their sacred works which went the length of *actually ordering the ceremony*, it might go on. This they said they could readily do; but could not in fact, produce anything beyond the well-known commendations bestowed on Suttees. The days were short, and while these discussions were going on, the sun was rapidly sinking, and indeed nearly set. They noticed this, I imagine, and seeming unwilling to press for my sanction to an immolation, which they must have perceived I contemplated with extreme horror; they inquired if I would object to the Suttee within Angrias territory, which was at hand. To this I replied, that I could exercise no jurisdiction there. They left me with the intention, as I conceived, of performing the ceremony beyond our line of boundary; but I found, on inquiry, that the design was abandoned."‡

The Magistrate of Poona, in 1823, Captain H. D. Robertson, exerted himself much for the abolition of Suttees. His discussions with the Brahmuns and Pundits, as given in the Parliamentary Papers, are highly interesting. Addressing the natives, he says, "Impressed with conviction that the Suttee is a barbarous one; aware that *the law of your forefathers no where inculcates as a positive law or duty, the practice, but merely allows it a colour of such sanction, by a positive endurance, that room even for doubt is left whether the sanction is not a kind of denouncement of it;* aware that your shastra, in no text, can be interpreted to attach blame or even censure to widows who do not become Suttees; that there is no stain that any one may dare to throw on the

* Par Papers, Vol. iii. p. 45. † Vol. iv. p. 20. ‡ p. 155, 156.

character or affection of her who does not sacrifice herself; aware moreover that the present generation and yourselves attach no contempt to those who survive their partners;—you cannot but agree with me, that there exists not one good cause for not stopping the practice altogether; but at the least, that there is none for regulating it according to the rules laid down in your law."*

An article "*On Female Immolation*," from the "Friend of India," March, 1821, contains a just and powerful statement of the point at issue.—" If it be advanced that the Hindoos think the Suttee is a religious rite, we would ask: Under what Government is the privilege of deciding on the nature of crime and punishments delegated to the subjects, more especially with regard to actions which render him obnoxious to justice? If the Hindoo who burns his innocent mother brings himself to think it a religious action, are the civil authorities, to whom the preservation of her life is committed, over which life he has not even a shadow of a right, obliged to think so? Are the sacred principles of justice to be abrogated because private individuals are mistaken in their notions of the worship which is acceptable to the Deity? The admission of this principle would rend asunder the bond of society; for if the highest crime, that of murder, may go unpunished when committed under a religious pretext, what crime can we consistently punish in India? There is no species of abomination which the Hindoo code does not sanction under some shape or other. But the whole course of our judicial proceedings demonstrates that we have never acted on these principles. 'But the Hindoo law commands this murderous practice.' This we must beg leave to deny.—Menu, *the parent of Indian jurisprudence*, for whom the natives entertain such veneration, that the Brahmun who possesses not a shalgram and a copy of his laws, is said to have forfeited his religious privileges:—Menu, respecting whom it is acknowledged, that 'what is contrary to his injunction is not law,' says nothing of female Immolation, but on the contrary prescribes rules for the conduct of widows during the time of their natural existence. If succeeding commentators have partially countenanced it, we would ask;—since what period have we taken those authors for our guide, and substituted their precepts instead of the principles of justice? For the honour of the British character we can reply that we have never done so; we have never put to death every Shoodra who has molested a Brahmun by bringing an action against him for debt, robbery, or adultery. We have not cut off the hands of every Shoodra who has seized a Brahmun by the neck; we have not poured melted lead into the ears of every Plebian who has listened, during the last sixty years, to reproaches against these twice-born favourites of heaven. Yet these injunctions are positively contained in their code. We have not listened for one moment to these books, but have defended the natives from the bloody rigour of their own laws. If any one be still disposed to object, that while we have in general upheld the authority of these books, we have disannulled those laws which appeared unjust, we really know not

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 181, 182.

what argument may be adduced more favourable to the abolition of female murder; for in this case it may be justly urged that if we possess a discretionary power over the Hindoo laws, the helpless widow has as strong a claim to our compassion as the members of the servile tribe, almost every individual of which is daily incurring the penalties decreed in them; and that if we make any exceptions in the execution of the Hindoo code, the unprotected female ought fully to share in them. *The burning of widows is a mere excrescence from the corrupt stock of polytheism.* We question whether *one half* of the population of India know anything of it but by report; the number of those who feel interested in supporting it consists only of those who are personally engaged in promoting female immolation. It does not require any great penetration to discern that those who have quietly submited to the death of their priests when justice has demanded the sacrifice, will manifest no disquietude when in the spirit of equity and humanity we prevent the murder of their sisters and daughters."*

H. Oakley, Esq. Magistrate, Hooghly, forcibly observes;—"The Suttee is supposed by some to be an act enjoined by the religion of the Hindoos, but if so why does it prevail in one part more than another? and why in the immediate neighbourhood of the Presidency? The worship of the Hindoo deities is tolerably equal wherever the religion extends, and the pilgrimages by which they are to be propitiated are the same throughout India; and if Suttee was really an act enjoined by religion, it would be universally meritorious, and equally observed wherever that religion is followed; but as it is not, we must account for its prevalence among the Hindoos in the neighbourhood of Calcutta, not by their peculiar strictness in the observance of religious and moral duties in general, but to some peculiar circumstances affecting their moral character. It is notorious that the natives of Calcutta and its vicinity exceed all others in profligacy, the idol of the drunkard and the thief (Kalee) is scarcely to be met with in the distant Provinces, and none but the most abandoned will confess that he is a follower of Kalee. In Calcutta we find few that are not. This worship must harden the hearts of her followers, and to these scenes of blood and crime must become familiar. By such men a Suttee is not regarded as a religious act, but a choice entertainment; and we may conclude, that the vicious propensities of the Hindoos in the vicinity of Calcutta are a cause of the comparative prevalence of Suttees."†

"The Suttee practice is not of *equal universal* prevalence as some Hindoo rites; but where Hindoism is in perfection compared with other places, *there it least obtains*, which proves it not essential to the integrity of the Hindoo religion."‡

Charles Marsh, Esq. in the House of Commons, in 1813, thus expressed himself relative to the obligatory nature of Suttees:—"*It is enjoined by no positive precept of the Hindoo religion* . It is a species of overstrained interpretation of its duties: and the offspring of that fanaticism which will inevitably grow up, and has more or less grown

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 20—26. † Vol. v. p. 5. ‡ Poynder's Speech, p. 194.

up, under every system of religion."* Ought not such fanaticism to be corrected?

The late C. Grant, Esq. in his "Observations on the manners of the natives of British India," adverts to this custom, and intimates, that to say we should continue to allow of these great disorders in "all time to come" would be too daring a conclusion." "It may indeed appear surprising that in the long period during which we have held these territories, we have made no serious attempt to recal the Hindoos to the dictates of truth and morality. This is a mortifying proof how little it has been considered that the ends of Government and the good of Society have an inseparable connection with right principles. We have been satisfied with the apparent submissiveness of these people, and have attended chiefly to the maintenance of our authority over the country, and the augmentation of our commerce and revenue; but have never, with a view to the promotion of their happiness, looked thoroughly into their internal state."†

The philanthropic and eloquent Wilberforce thus pleaded the cause of benighted India, in the British Senate, in 1813:—"Oh Sir, if we lived nearer these unfortunate people, their distressed situation would exact from us more prompt relief. It was formerly my task to plead the cause of a people whose woes affected every heart, who were finally rescued from the situation in which they groaned by the abolition of the Slave Trade. That cause was doubtless the cause of suffering humanity; but I declare that, even if we exclude the consideration of religion, *humanity appears to me to be still more concerned in the cause I am now pleading than in that of which I was formerly the advocate.*"

The Rev. T. Scott of Aston Sandford, in his valuable Commentary, has the following remarks on Numbers xxxv. 33:—"So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are; for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein but by the blood of him that shed it." "The *connivance* of our Government in the burning of widows, and in human sacrifices, and in other species of murder committed in our East Indian dominions, under the pretext of an idolatrous religion, is wholly unjustifiable, and *burdens our land, and all connected with those distant regions, with the guilt of blood not expiated by that of those who shed it.*"—The blood of Suttees cries to Britain. O may she soon "make inquisition for blood," that "the blood of the souls of the poor innocents" may not be "found upon her skirts."

The Rev. H. Shepherd, late senior Chaplain in Calcutta, in a Pamphlet "On the Inefficiency of the Ecclesiastical Establishment of India," justly remarks; "These dreadful sacrifices (Suttees) form *no essential part of the Hindoo system of religion;* and that these burnings alive, amidst the horrid din of discordant instruments and the unhallowed shouts of enthusiastic thousands, proceed from the force of education, or perhaps from an organized system of an intolerant

* Dr. John's Pamphlet on the Suttee, p. 96. † Par. Papers. Vol. v. p. 33.—Townley's Answer to the Abbey Dubois, p. 109.

priesthood. If it were a system of religion, as shedding of human blood, it would have no claim to toleration from any Government; but as a system of priestcraft, it may more consistently be considered as a system of murder; and as such it ought, even by the strong arm of power, to be suppressed." Page 66, 67.

It appears very important to ascertain the opinion of the Hindoos themselves upon the obligation of the rite of Suttee. In the Bewasta, received from Mutoonjoy Pundit of the Supreme Court in 1817, respecting the burning of Hindoo widows and other sacrifices among the Hindoos, Menu is not mentioned among the various authorities quoted; and it is acknowledged "on the subject of anoogamun the shastras exhibit a great variety of opinions; but no difference prevails with regard to the propriety of leading a life of austerity."*

The Par. Papers on Hindoo Immolations, printed May, 1827, contain some interesting particulars respecting *the opinions of the natives on the suppression of Suttees.* "The Judge of the Southern Concan, V. Hale, Esq. under date October, 1819, says; 'In the neighbouring state of Sawunt Warree these restrictions (adopted by the Peishwa) were carried at one time to much greater length than mere persuasion, since we find during the reign of Kem Sawunt *a positive prohibition against the practice*, which existed for ten or twelve years, and that too *without creating any disturbance or any outward marks of discontent*, affording, (if the tradition be not greatly exaggerated,) a most favourable instance of what might be done, and to what the people would submit without considering their religious prejudices too much shocked."†

C. M. Lushington, Esq. Acting Magistrate of Combaconum, in a letter dated Sep. 1813, says; "I can speak from positive authority, that his Highness the Rajah of Tanjore has ever discouraged it." Mr. Lushington alludes to Serfajee, the present Rajah, who had succeeded his uncle Ameer Sing, and we understand that the late Rajah Tuljajee, of whom the present Rajah is the adopted son, discouraged the practice; and as a proof of his disapprobation of it, a very few hours before his death, gave positive orders to his wives not to burn on his funeral pile, and to his principal officer not to permit them, and the orders were obeyed without opposition and apparently without exciting any dissatisfaction."‡

The resident of Tanjore, in a letter to the chief Secretary to Government, dated June 12, 1825, writes; "It has been customary in Tondiman's family for the wife to sacrifice herself on the funeral pile of her husband. On the present occasion the first wife declared her intention of burning with the body; but I am happy to say that she was dissuaded from her resolution by the arguments and entreaties of Ragonath Tondiman. In conversing with the brothers upon the subject of such sacrifices, they had more than once expressed their abhorrence of a practice so revolting to humanity; and the survivor has now had a mournful occasion for proving the sincerity of the sentiments he expressed." The Governor of Madras having expressed his

* Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 124. † Vol. v. p. 23. ‡ p. 25.

approbation of this conduct, the Resident, under date Aug. 17th, states the influence of it. He says; "I did not fail to take a proper opportunity of communicating to Tondiman the particular approbation with which the Government have regarded his conduct. The highly gratifying terms in which the Honourable the Governor in Council has conveyed his sentiments will, I am confident, for ever secure Tondiman's influence to the cause of humanity. It has already been successfully exerted in two other instances, and the wives of two men of rank who had determined to burn themselves with the bodies of their husbands have been persuaded, through his intercession, to recede from their intention. *Several self-devoted victims have, through the Rajah of Tanjore, been rescued from a cruel death, and are now supported by his bounty.* Both the Tanjore Rajah and the Tondiman have made it known that *they support and protect every woman who allows herself to be dissuaded from burning with the body of her husband.*"*

Captain H. D. Robertson, Collector of Poonah, in a letter addressed to the Commissioner in the Deccan, Jan. 5, 1825, speaking of the prevention of a Suttee, adds; "The widow having expressed her regret that she had already parted with all her trifling means, Atyajee Baboo Row, her near connexion, *pledged, in the kindest manner, his word to maintain her during life, in proportion to his means. This generous assurance was immediately followed by the restoration, by every one, of the petty presents they had just received from the woman.* I have expressed to Vencutt Row Sewajee my best thanks for his activity in the affair; and have desired him to inform Atyajee Baboo Row, that if he wishes to be employed in the service of Government I shall have much pleasure in giving him an office suitable to his abilities, from the enjoyment of the salary of which he will not be liable to repent of this humanity to his female relative."†

W. Chaplin, Esq. Commissioner in the Deccan, (under date June 17, 1825,) observes, "The Brahmuns appear to be far from satisfied with the mode of our interposition, and some have suggested to me, that in preference to continuing it, *the community would be infinitely better pleased were Government absolutely to prohibit women altogether from becoming Suttees.*"‡

F. Warden, Esq. Member of Council, Bombay, in a minute relative to Suttees, (June, 1825,) observes, "The remark contained in the Commissioner's letter affords an opening for considering the expediency of exercising a more decided interference by absolutely prohibiting the practice of Suttee: I have already recorded an opinion that *all the sanguinary customs of the Hindoos might be prohibited, without affecting either the security or popularity of our supremacy.* Many of the most intelligent Brahmuns view the custom with abhorrence; from the Mahrattas, I conclude, we need apprehend no opposition, nor from the Mahomedans; and we may safely calculate on the forbearance of a majority of those who possess influence over the minds of the Brahmunee females."§

*Par. Papers, Vol. v. p. 131, 132. † p. 137. ‡ p. 146. § p. 149.

The speech of J. Poynder, Esq. on "Human sacrifices in India," contains some highly interesting information upon this view of the subject. The late Rev. W. Ward, in a letter to the present Earl of Claredon, relates the following remarkable fact:—"In 1817, I was riding near Serampore, where there had been a Suttee: after making inquiries respecting the family and rank of the widow, I addressed a few individuals on the crime in which they had been assisting. One of these men answered; "*Sir, whatever the act now committed may be, we have nothing to fear. You* (the English Government,) *must see to that, for the Police Magistrate has been here and given the order, and according to that order, the woman has been burnt.*"*

"The natives themselves have excluded Suttees from the pale of the Hindoo religion; and so much light has been thrown on this subject since the year 1812, when the restrictive Regulation was framed, that Government need not be ashamed to plead the want of information on which it was founded as a reason for now rescinding it."†

A Military Officer describing a Suttee which took place in June, 1826, near Bishop's College, Calcutta; and which he witnessed in company with Principal Mill, and some other Clergymen; shows the views of the natives relative to our permission of this dreadful rite. "'It is our custom,' said they, 'and it is sanctioned by our laws,—if we are wrong, your laws are to blame for making the practice legal, and thereby showing that they approve of it as just and right, and not cruel or sinful. If you have any complaint to make, or any thing further to say, don't trouble us, but go to your own Magistrates and report to them.' This was the substance of their answer to Mr. Mill, and completely stopped their mouths. This just reasoning of the Brahmuns speaks for itself, that as long as this dreadful practice is sanctioned by our laws, it will assuredly continue, and I fear increase, and the Brahmuns will have perpetual cause to exult and throw the odium on our own laws."‡

The Judge of Chittor, (Madras Presidency,) under date April, 1823, declares, "The best informed and most respectable part of the natives would themselves have often prevented this ceremony, if they had had the power."§

At Malabar, a Summary of the Laws of the Shastra was drawn up by the natives, from which they actually conclude against the practice in the following terms:—"From these texts it is clear that the Rules relative to the observance if Anugamanum (Suttee,) does not extend to the Keroola, and cannot be admitted to be performed there, even if a person is willing to do so."‖

In the close of 1819, a petition was presented to the late Marquis of Hastings, from the Hindoo Inhabitants of Calcutta, praying for the abolition of Suttees. An extract only is given:—"Your petitioners beg leave to submit to the benevolent attention of your Lordship's Government, that in the opinion of many of the most learned Brahmuns founded upon the Shastras, all kinds of voluntary death are prohibited; that Menu, whose authority is ad-

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* Poynder's Speech, p. 65. † p. 70. ‡ p. 114. § p. 216. ‖ p. 217.

mitted to be equal to that of the Vedas, positively enjoins widows to lead a life of virtue and abstinence from sensual gratifications; that the Vedant which contains the essence of the Vedas, as well as the Geeta, forbid all acts done with the view of future temporary reward, and that amongst the inferior authorities, while some, as the Smritee Shastras, actually prohibit all violent death: others, Mitakshura, declare the leading of virtuous life preferable to dying on the pile of the husband; and a few only insist on the superior merit of concremation."*

"It will not form so much a matter of astonishment that the natives of India should be desirous of ridding themselves from such a yoke, when it is remembered that some of the heathens of an early period (adverting to the time antecedent to the introduction of Christianity itself) were enabled, by the mere light of nature, to discern the evil of similar practices, and actually to abolish them without the aid of a revelation from heaven.

"It is a very remarkable fact, that the Romans (though heathens themselves) abolished human sacrifices in this country, at least a century and half before the introduction of Christianity among us. The Romans conceived such an aversion to the Druids, the then high priests of these abominations, whose inhumanities are minutely described by *Diodorus Siculus*, (Lib. 5.) that contrary to the ordinary policy observed by that people, in their conquests, of invariably tolerating the religion of the country, they resolved upon an utter extirpation of these priests and their cruelties.

"It appears from Pliny, (L. 30. c. 1.) that human sacrifices were first forbidden at Rome, by a decree of the Senate, A. U. C. 657, but that some persons still continuing them privately, the Emperor Augustus renewed the prohibition with effect. The Emperor Tiberius then suppressed them in Gaul, and Claudius, as appears from Suetonius (In Claud. c. 25.) extirpated the Druids as well as their sanguinary worship in that country. Those sacrifices consisted in our own country (as appears from Pomponius Mela *de situ orbis* L. 3. c. 2.) until about the sixtieth year of the Christian aera, when the Roman General, Paulinus Suetonius, having reduced the Island of Anglesea, overthrew the Druids and their inhuman rites so completely, that they never afterwards revived; but all this was considerably anterior to the introduction of Christianity itself. And will it be endured that our own heathen conquerors shall have actually done more for us than we are willing to do for our Indian subjects? Shall the mere natural principle of "Homo sum humani nihil a me, alienum puto" have exercised an influence on idolatrous and pagan Rome, and shall Britain, acting under far higher sanctions, and obliged by a more powerful responsibility, refuse to acknowledge the force of the same argument?"†

Ram Mohum Roy in his pamphlet entitled, "A Conference between an Advocate and an Opponent of the practice of burning widows," (which I should be happy to see re-printed in this country,) shows the sentiments of the humane and enlightened among the Hindoos on this subject:—"The Veda declares—'By living in the prac-

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* Poynder's Speech, p. 220. † p. 222—224.

tice of regular and occasional duties the mind may be purified. By hearing and reflecting and constantly meditating on the Supreme Being, absorption in Brumhu may be attained. Therefore from a desire during life, of future fruition, life ought not to be destroyed!' Menu, Yagnyuvulkyu, and others, have, in their respective codes of law, prescribed to widows the duties of ascetics only. The ancient saints and holy teachers and their commentators and yourselves, (Advocates of the Suttee,) as well as we, and all others, agree that Menu is better acquainted than any other lawgivers with the spirit of the Vedas. He has directed widows to spend their lives as ascetics." It is thus closed: "It is to me a source of great satisfaction that you (the Advocates) are now ready to take this matter into your serious consideration. By forsaking prejudice and reflecting on the shastra, what is really conformable to its precepts may be perceived, and the *evil and disgrace brought on this community, by the crime of female murder, will cease.*"

The Rev. H. Townley, in his "Answer to the Abbe Dubois," observes;—"I have heard of the reply being repeatedly given to the expostulations of Europeans; "*If there is any blame in our proceedings, it belongs to yourselves, for we are acting under British sanction.*" He adds, "The native who instructed me in the Bengalee language, (who was a Brahmun of more than ordinary intelligence,) frequently expressed his surprise to me that Government did not issue an order that no more Suttees should be permitted; intimating his conviction that no commotion whatever would ensue."*

Why is Britain afraid to do justice upon those who shed innocent blood? —"Where are the bowels of our mercy?—Where our fears of the retributive justice of Heaven?—How long shall this scourge continue to desolate India, and dishonour Britain? We may answer in the memorable language of a Brahmun. '*Till the British Government shall think proper to abolish it.*"†

When Dr. Johns was in India (in 1812,) the principal Brahmuns at the Mission Press, Serampore, were asked, whether the interference of the Government to suppress so horrid a custom would be objected to by the natives. They promptly answered "*that it would not*, and encouraged the idea of such an interference."‡ "It ought to be considered, that some of the most respectable Pundits do not approve the practice, and would be happy if it were abolished: while many others *reproach us for permitting it to exist.*'"§

While some of the authorities in India hesitate relative to the propriety of suppressing Suttees, it may be interesting briefly to notice, *methods proposed for the abolition of this horrid rite.*

In 1805 the Court of Nizamut Adawlut Calcutta, expressed themselves as follows:—"After information has been obtained of the extent to which the practice prevails, and of the districts in which it has fallen into disuse, or in which it is discountenanced by the most respectable classes, it may be *immediately abolished in particular districts*, and be checked and ul-

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* Townley's Answer to the Abbey Dubois, p. 180, 190. † Grimshaw's Appeal, p. 24. ‡ See Dr. John's Pamphlet, p. 92.—Account of York Meeting, p. 23, 24. § Asiatic Observer, No. viii. Oct. 1824, p. 371.

timately prohibited in the other parts of these Provinces." But "Since this time the inhuman practice, instead of its abolition being effected or any prohibition of it issued, appears to have gradually increased!"*

J. H. Harington, Esq. Member of Council, Calcutta, 1827; in a very important Minute on Suttees, dated June 28, 1823, states:—"With respect to the impracticability of putting a stop to the immolation of Hindoo widows by a legal prohibition and penal enactments; *if the assistance of Brahmuns and others be requisite to enable the widow to devote herself in the prescribed mode*, it would surely be possible to prevent such aid being given by a public interdiction, with a declaration that any person hereafter promoting a female sacrifice, shall be liable to a criminal prosecution as principals or accomplices, for homicide; and that on conviction, it will not be held any justification, that the person was desired by the deceased to cause, aid, or in any manner to promote her death; or that the deceased became a Suttee by a voluntary act of self-devotion. This, in fact, is already in force, (Sec. 3. Regula. viii. 1799,) although the intention of the Regulation has not been considered applicable to Suttees. It would I conceive be sufficient to issue a proclamation through the country, declaring the Section applicable to all persons convicted as principals or accomplices in wilful homicide, in the instance of a woman sacrificed by *sahamaran* or *anoomaran*.† It is probable that a proclamation to this effect would not at once prove completely effectual, secret immolations would still take place occasionally, and in some instances the widow, under a paroxysm of grief and the delusion of superstition, might be expected to devote herself on her husband's pile, or otherwise even without Brahminical assistance; but such cases would be rare; and after a few examples of wilful deviation from the rule, I *have no doubt the practice would be soon abandoned, as unsanctioned by Government, and subjecting the abettors to punishment in our criminal courts*."‡ It is deeply to be regretted that this judicious plan has not been adopted. I have heard of a Magistrate at Ganjam preventing a Suttee by prohibiting the sale of the materials requisite for the dreadful sacrifice.

The Magistrate at Gazeepore, W. L. Melville, Esq. addressed a letter to the Judges of the Provincial Court Circuit, Benares, dated July 8, 1823, in which he says:—"I wish to obtain the sanction of the superior authorities to a plan for checking the practice of Suttee. It appears to me desirable to attempt to carry this object, in the first instance, *in particular districts*, and not simultaneously throughout the country. I do not think any new Regulations upon the subject are requisite. Under the Mahometan law I conceive any person aiding or abetting another in committing suicide would be punishable: all I wish for is *permission to carry into execution laws which have been dormant*. I would begin by endeavouring to induce the *principal people in the district to unite among themselves to abandon and discourage the practice*; should they consent to this, little further difficulty would, I hope, be experienced; should I be mistaken and meet with decided opposition, I doubt whether it would be expedient to proceed farther at present: from what I have heard I am inclined to think the people would be very well pleased to have so good a

* Par. Papers, Vol. v. 1827. p. 6. † Burning with or without the body of her husband.
‡ Vol. iv. 1825, p. 10.

reason as an order of Government would afford for entirely giving up the performance of the rite." On this communication it is remarked:—"The Court have no observations, in addition to what have been already advanced to offer on the present occasion."* Fort William, July 25, 1823.

Captain H. Pottinger, Collector of Ahmednauger, speaking of a Suttee that occurred in that city in Aug. 1818, says:—"I tacitly consented to the sacrifice, but at the same time positively *refused any assistance towards defraying the expenses for the requisite clothes for the woman or for the wood to form the pyre, and likewise declined to sanction the proceeding by my presence or that of any person on my part.* I have little doubt of the success of my interposition, in the majority of cases that may occur, when I have it in my power *to assure the woman of the means of subsistence*."† A former Volume of the Papers (Vol. iii. p. 47,) remarks:—"An encouragement seems at one time to have been held out to Suttees, by granting to the family of the victim a portion of free land, similar to the provisions of the descendants of seapoys killed on service. The instances are far from numerous." (Chandgurgh.) Bombay Presidency, July, 1821. It is to be hoped that such instances of the encouragement of this custom are not numerous!

In the Par. Papers, Vol. i. p. 264—268, relative to the Bombay Presidency; reference is made to making provision for the widow who was prevailed upon to decline immolating herself. But this plan like every other, short of entire pohibition, is defective, as it may have (to use the language of W. Chaplin, Esq. Commissioner of the Deccan,) "The injurious effect of leading persons to feign a resolution to burn themselves in the hope of being paid for desisting."

J. H. Harington, Esq. suggested that Magistrates should be authorized "to hold out some public encouragement, as an honorary dress, title, or other rewards, to any landholder or other person of local influence, who should distinguish himself by active and successful endeavours to discourage and suppress the sacrifice of Hindoo widows." The chief Secretary to Government, replied under date, Ap. 14, 1825:—"His Lordship in Council will be happy to notice by a suitable mark of his approbation, any Zemindar, or other native of rank or respectability, who may have caused or may cause the discontinuance of the practice where it was before prevalent among his own relations and connexions, and may have successfully exerted himself in procuring the general relinquishment of it in his own estate, or to any considerable extent within the sphere of his influence."‡

The nature of the system of discountenancing Suttees pursued on the Madras side of India is as follows,—"Where, (says the writer of the following article, in a Calcutta paper,) the immolation of widows *though once frequent, is now seldom known.*" "Before any woman can destroy herself by burning, permission must be obtained of the Magistrate. On the request being preferred, the applicant is directed to wait a little for an answer; the Magistrate in the mean time sends for his Cutwal and instructs him to proclaim that a certain woman intends burning herself, but should any Bunian or Bukall be discovered selling any article required for the purpose to the said woman, or any cooly (labourer) offering his assistance by carrying oil, wood, &c. to the spot appointed, the former shall be turn-

* Par. Papers, Vol. iv. p. 84, 85. † Vol. v. p. 20. ‡ p. 51.

ed out of the bazar, and the latter otherwise punished. It is also proclaimed, that should any crowd collect, the police peons are to disperse it, and to confine to the Cutwal's Choultry all persons resisting the police authority; should any Brahmun belonging to any public offices be seen in the crowd, or any of his relations be found aiding the ceremony, *such servant shall be discharged from his situation.* The whole of this being proclaimed, the applicant is desired to take leave. As may be expected, it has been observed, that *with these restrictions no burning has taken place!—Prevent a crowd from collecting to witness the immolation, and rest assured no such ceremony proceeds!* Mark the disappointment of the Brahmun when he discovers that a crowd cannot be collected; mortified, he abandons the victim of his persuasion to shift for herself. His zeal is exerted in proportion to his expected popularity, or to the worldly advantage he is to derive. So it is with the poor deluded widows, harrassed into assent to they know not what, ninety-nine out of a hundred of them secretly rejoice that their attempt at self-destruction has been, by the above means, frustrated. As the remedy can hardly be said to be attended with coercion, it appears no difficult undertaking to introduce the practice of it in Bengal, and hereby render an essential service to the Hindoo community." (R. S. Moligaipore, March, 1823.)

In the account of the Suttee witnessed by Principal Mill of Bishop's College, Calcutta, it is stated:—"I have often heard this practice spoken of by sensible men, long resident in India, who universally agree, that, if it were made a *capital offence by our laws*, and a few examples made, the evil custom would immediately cease to be practiced throughout India: and which would be only justly taking away the forfeited lives of a few, to save the lives of thousands."*

A Civil Officer, of the Madras Presidency, now in England, thus expresses his opinion of the ease of the abolition by the supreme Authorities in India:—"The practice of Suttee came officially under my notice, and as to the practicability of its suppression, from my own knowledge of the native character, I should say decidedly—*a specific denunciation against all abettors of this practice by the Government, would be sufficient to secure it*, and this could be done not only with safety but without a murmur from the native population. The practice has been greatly checked simply by the European Officer making it specifically known to his Native Officers, that, it was his wish that it should not take place, and calling upon them to use the influence of their stations to prevent it. It has also been suppressed by the Magistrate assuming, on his own responsibility, the power of refusing to permit any burnings in his jurisdiction; and in no case have I ever heard of its producing the slightest disturbance."†

J. Poynder, Esq. very justly remarks:—"The whole evidence supplied by the Par. Papers, Vol. vi. on 'Infanticide," is opposed to any dependence being placed on the exercise of an undefined and discretionary power by the local agents, with any reasonable hope of a general concert or any prospect of permanent advantage or final abolition."‡

The Rev. H. Shepherd, late of Calcutta, in his pamphlet "On the inefficiency of the Ecclesiastical Establishment of India" suggests the following steps to suppress Suttees; that,—"An edict be published, declara-

* Poynder's Speech, p. 115. † p. 180—182. ‡ p. 182.

tory that Suttees shall continue to be allowed to take place under the Regulations now in force, but that the Government cannot refrain from expressing their utter abhorrence of such proceedings, they do for the future determine, *that, no son, brother, or cousin, of the first or second degree, of any female so burning, shall be permitted to hold any situation or renew any leases under Government.* Such a decree would so effectually operate in deterring many from their atrocious practices, who employ artifice to entrap the widow into the fatal declaration which consigns her to death; that thousands in after-times will live to bless the Government who have had the power and the will to deliver them from the despotic dominion of a sanguinary priesthood."* This measure would doubtless save many widows, but would not annihilate the cruel custom.

The Editor of the "Friend of India" suggests:—"Were second marriages esteemed honourable, and the children born of them permitted to inherit equally with those of a first marriage; a practice sanctioned not merely by the laws of all Christian countries, but even those of Greece and Rome notwithstanding their idolatry; many think that this alone would gradually extinguish the practice." Vol. ii. p. 332. The importance of such a change in the circumstances of Hindoo widows must be self-evident.

In the Asiatic Journal for July, 1826, published in London, are three letters in English, written by Bengalees, on the subject of Suttees, extracted from a Calcutta Newspaper, which are very curious compositions, and show the sentiments of sensible natives on the nature of this appalling rite. We can give but a short extract or two.— "Her brother Roopnarain Gosaul, who is supposed to be a wealthy man, and being so long in the Hon. Company's service, ought to be discharged from his place, and prosecuted in the Supreme Court for giving countenance to such an inhuman act. *No body anger could be minded when a life is concerned; she ought to be prevented to burn.* If Governor General *gives orders to remove the woman from her relations, at her pronouncing that she will burn, and allow her to remain one day in a comfortable place with English Ladies that understands the country's language, there is no doubt her mind shall be purified, and her foolish thoughts shall be removed, and will not be anxious to do such a base act as to burn with the dead person.*" Muddunmohun Mullick, Calcutta, Jan. 27, 1826.

"I fully agree with the sentiments contained in Muddunmohun's letter. If the Government in Council gives order to remove all the women on pronouncing that they will burn, to be placed with an intelligent English person to persuade them to the contrary, and not allow any of the relations to converse, or make them take *intoxicated drugs*, they will never die in such an inhuman manner. I have lost my wife these *six years*, and have not married again for fear she may burn with my body at my death.—The Hindoo women have no sense; they hear from their superiors the cremation is an holy act, and they are fools enough to listen it, which only induces them to express their sentiments that they will burn; and as soon as such a declaration is obtained, all the unfeeling relations use all their exertions to induce

* Shepherd's Inef. of Ecc. Esta. of India, p. 67, 68.

the poor unfortunate widows to suffer such a cruel death. I hope you will not refuse to have this appeared in your interesting Paper, and oblige me." Sunchurn Sill, Calcutta, Jan. 31, 1826.

A writer in the Asiatic Journal, No. 8. (published in Calcutta, Oct. 1824,) very forcibly remarks relative to the abolition of Suttees,—"How many noble souls have ventured on some bold enterprize, without seeing how they could accomplish their design; yet, by close attention and perseverance, a way is opened to their view, and means have offered themselves almost spontaneously for forwarding their wishes, so that at length they have attained to that which at first appeared to them almost impossible to be acquired. The noblest institutions by which Great Britain is adorned, and our happiness increased, have originated in this manner. Let *one man of influence in society* take the object into consideration, deliberately, and with a determination to find out some plan to which he can solicit the attention of the public, and we have as little doubt of his success as we have of the disposition of the public to assist him. Various ideas have been started on this subject, and some of them, were they adopted, might prove beneficial. It has been thought that it would be advisable for the inhabitants of Calcutta, to present a petition to the Supreme Government, or through them to *our own Legislators at home.* It would certainly be an honourable thing to those who made it, and entitle them to *a place among the friends of India to the latest age.* It has been suggested that it would be very honourable to the ladies in Calcutta, were they all to unite in presenting a petition and soliciting the Lady of the Governor General, to do them the honour of putting her name first. This would display the humanity and sympathy of the Calcutta Ladies, and have a great practical effect, by leading many to impress on their husbands the importance of rescuing a degraded part of the female sex.* If all *the Knights* of the present day could be persuaded to undertake the rescuing of Bengalee widows from the flames, they would attempt a nobler deed than was ever achieved since the order was instituted; and, should they be successful, would transmit to posterity a name more honourable than any or all their brethren. Another plan that has been proposed, and acted upon in part, is, that Houses of Agency, Mercantile Houses, &c., would set their faces against this practice, by dismissing from their employment any person who has been brutal enough *to burn his own mother.* This would teach the natives the abhorrence that Europeans have of the crime, and would, in many instances, prevent it from being committed. We are encouraged, from the spirit of the British Nation, and the prophecies of Scripture, confidently to anticipate an end of the miseries we now deplore. That a Parliament which has abolished the Slave Trade, will for ever permit the burning of widows, we can never believe. Slavery

* Would not petitions to the British Parliament, signed by females from the principal Cities and Towns in Britain and Ireland, have a similar effect? Whose tender, active, noble spirit will commence this good work? Should it be objected—this is an unprecedented method of expressing public opinion; it may be replied, "Is not the destruction of so many hundred unhappy widows annually in British India, a sufficient justification of it?"

did not receive its death-blow at once; many blows were aimed at the monster before its head was broken; and its carcase is not even yet all consumed. So it may be in the case under discussion: it may be brought forward several times before all objections to it, real and fictious, are answered; but, *unless humanity and wisdom perish from the British Senate, we are certain that sooner or later they will put an end to this horrid practice.*"

What shall arouse British humanity, magnanimity, justice, and piety, to abolish without delay the bloody rite of Suttee? Behold *the magnitude of the evil.* The official returns of the widows buried or burnt alive in the Bengal Presidency, from 1815 to 1824 inclusive were 5997; which with the returns from the other Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, where the custom is much less frequent than in Bengal, would amount to 6632: (p. 13.) Here is a sacrifice every ten years to the Moloch of superstition in India, before whom Britain is seen to tremble, and her arm become nerveless in the protection of the unhappy widow. Oh Britain I blush for thee! Will it be believed a century hence that, "we the British people—the advocates of every thing humane—the natural opponents of every thing cruel and oppressive—we the protectors of innocence, the avengers of wrong! that we the British people *sanctioned by our own authority* this diabolical custom!" (Jackson's Speech, p. 13.) How injurious must be its influence upon the tributary, allied, and neighbouring princes, in whose territories this most unnatural custom exists!* Are there a thousand widows annually sacrificed in British India, how many thousands must have perished since the rise of the British power after the decisive battle of Plassey in 1756.† *Seventy thousand* widows thus cruelly murdered! "Murder most foul, strange, and unnatural." What a tragic history would a complete detail of these burnings make! Imagination fails in attempting to describe the terrors of these ravages of superstition; the mind recoils from the subject: but as the philanthropic Wilberforce pleaded for India before the British Parliament, in 1813:—"True humanity does not consist in a squeamish ear, but in a humane heart; it consists in feeling for the miseries of our fellow creatures and endeavouring to put an end to them—not in turning away from the view of them, or denying their existence when they are feelingly stated."

The responsibility of Britain to exert her influence in abolishing this practice should be seriously considered. Britain delays to speak the decisive word that shall save ten thousand widows from death, but (how important the inquiry!) "*On whom will the blood of the many*

* "By accounts lately received from the Hill country 28 *females were burnt with the remains of one of the Rajahs;* there appear to have been two other women who escaped; one was pregnant, the other resisted all importunity to be burnt. How can we expect that these horrid practices will cease among the neighbouring heathen Princes, while they are countenanced by the British Government!" Proceedings of Manchester Meeting p. 9. "When Row Lacka, grandfather of the present Chief of Cutch died, 15 *concubines burned at his funeral pile*, but not one of his wives performed the sacrifice." Hamilton's Hind. Vol. i. p 638.

† It is a fact worthy of being generally known, as demonstrating even in the infancy of British power in the East, and the practicability and success of humane exertions on behalf of Hindoos, that, Mr. Job Carnock, who founded Calcutta, in 1694, rescued a Native woman from the funeral pile, and made her his wife. Ought not Calcutta thus founded in mercy to promulgate the Law, which declares the Suttee murder?

thousand victims that are destined to perish be visited? This is a solemn question, before which we may well pause and weigh all the present and the future consequences. It cannot be dissembled, that the charge of guilt attaches primarily to the *Government of India*, who are the conscious spectators of the act, and possessing the means, are yet deterred from employing those means for its suppression. It next attaches to the *British Government* at home, who acquiesce in the motives that influence this reluctance. And finally, the *whole British people become parties to this moral guilt*, if knowing, as they do, the existence of the crime, they do not consider themselves pledged to use all lawful means for abolishing a rite, derogatory to the British character, forming an anomaly in the administration of civil law, and involving a flagrant breach of the law of God."* May those in whose hands are the lives of these myriads of helpless females, "accounted as sheep for the slaughter," and the destinies of the millions of Hindostan consider the impressive language of the Word of God; "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death and ready to be slain: if thou sayest, behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider? and He that keepeth thy soul doth not he know? and shall not He render to man according to his works?" Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

The general expression of public opinion by petitions to Parliament, for the abolition of the burning of widows is important. The attention of the Legislature will be awakened and directed to the subject, and encouraged to act worthy of their high character. "In an account of the York Meeting, for petitioning Parliament on the subject of the Immolation of Hindoo widows, held Jan. 19, 1827," it is stated, "the importance of petitioning Parliament will be duly appreciated, when it is understood that the late Marquis of Hastings said *he would at once have put down the atrocious practice, if he could have relied upon the popular feeling being in his favour in our own country, and that* THE DANGER WAS FELT—NOT IN INDIA BUT ONLY IN ENGLAND!"—Why has not Britain long since removed this unaccountable suspicion of her abhorrence of shedding innocent blood? Let the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, speak, and supplicate that no more of these horrid murders defile our country.

Bedford in 1823, and the Village of Crail, near Edinburgh, in 1825, have taken the lead in this work of justice and mercy In the year 1827, the author has heard of petitions to Parliament relative to this object from

Ashbourn	East Retford	Newark	Sutton Ashfield
Belper	Hinckley	Newbury	Staines
Belfast	Hinton	Northampton	York.
Chester	Loughborough	Reading	
Colchester	Manchester	Rochdale	
Derby	Melbourn	Salisbury	

It is presumed that some other places followed the same example, and that preparations are made for a more general expression of public opinion, when the subject of the abolition of Suttees is brought before the

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* Grimshawe's Appeal, p. 20, 26.

Nation, at the present Session of Parliament. The abolition of human sacrifices in India, has been discussed at a general Court of Proprietors held in March, 1827; and some progress has been made towards the accomplishment of the object here discussed. The following petition, (which may serve as a specimen,) was adopted at a very respectable meeting at Manchester. A similar one was presented to the Hon. House of Commons:—

To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of Manchester and its Vicinity, adopted at a Public Meeting, convened by the Boroughreeve and Constables of Manchester, and held in the Town Hall, on the 9th of May, 1827.

Sheweth,—That your Petitioners have learned with the greatest regret that the Burning of Widows with the dead Bodies of their Husbands, and other customs by which human life is wantonly sacrificed, continue to be practised in various parts of British India, with undiminished frequency, in gross violation of the Law of God, and of the rights and feelings of humanity.

That it further appears to your Petitioners that the existing regulations of the Suttee, circulated by the Bengal Government, in one thousand eight hundred and fifteen have rather tended to increase than to diminish the number of human sacrifices, it being understood by the Natives, that by those regulations the sanction of the ruling power is now added to the recommendation of the shastra.

That it appears from documents submitted to your Right Honourable House, and since laid before the public, that the practice of Burning Hindoo Women alive, if prohibited by Government, might be effectually suppressed, whithout any ground for apprehension of evil consequences.

That your Petitioners deeply impressed with the obligation of the Inhabitants of Britain, to promote the civilization and improvement of their fellow-subjects in India, as expressed by a resolution of your Right Honourable House, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirteen, most earnestly implore your Right Honourable House, to adopt such measures as may be deemed most expedient and effectual for the suppression of customs so abhorrent from the British character, and so opposed to the welfare of our Indian possessions, and thus to remove the stigma which at present attaches to our national character and relieve the Inhabitants of British India from this cruel scourge.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Under the law of Moses even uncertain murder was to be expiated, and the people taught to pray;—"Be merciful, O Lord, unto thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge." (Deu. xxi. 8.) May Britain feel her responsibility to "put away the guilt of innocent blood."

The degraded state of India is most apparent, and the consequent duty of Britain to promote its melioration and evangelization. Its Suttees, infanticides, pilgrimages, swinging festivals, murder of the sick by the Ganges, innumerable destructive austerities, &c. show that as it respects its intellectual and moral cultivation the people are "sitting in darkness and the region of the shadow of death." The appalling description, by Job appears almost literally applicable to it. "A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order and where the light is as darkness." Job, x. 22. Bible, Missionary, and Education Societies are dispelling the darkness.

"The day has dawn'd which never more shall close."

I have seen a Bengalee Christian and a Preacher, who, when a boy, set fire to the pile that consumed the body of his father and living mother to ashes! Behold the triumph of Christianity. Let

means adequate to the great work of the illumination of India and the East be applied, and all the atrocity of heathenism—its idols—its temples, will ere long be seen no more. Let the friends of humanity and religion prosecute their arduous work, for, their "labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The *summary view* of this deeply interesting subject appears as follows:—The practice in India of burying or burning widows alive with their deceased husbands, is unnatural and inhuman. To attempt to prove this would be like attempting to prove a truism; or what it can scarcely be imagined any one ever doubted. The abolition of this horrid rite appears consistent with the laws of nations and of God. —The Divine injunction to Noah and his sons, the great progenitors of the Nations, has been generally recognized, among mankind:— "At the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Gen. ix. 5, 6. It has appeared that Menu, the great Indian Legislator, knew nothing of so atrocious an infraction of the principles of humanity and justice, as the immolation of females; and though a few modern writers may have recommended it, can the opinion of four or five Hindoo authors, be considered sufficient authority for the wanton and cruel sacrifice of a thousand unhappy widows every year? Its abolition appears consonant with the dictates of sound reason and the Word of God.

It is not unfrequently asked by some—Has not Britain formed a connection with India and agreed to govern it upon such terms as to admit the perpetration of these evils? Does not such a contract with India exist? The late C. Grant, Esq. in his "Observations on the state of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain," written in 1792, and submitted to the Hon. Court of Directors in 1797, thus answers these inquiries:—"Are we bound for ever to preserve all the enormities in the Hindoo system? Have we become the guardians of every monstrous principle and practice which it contains? Are we pledged to support for all generations by the authority of our Government, and the power of our arms, the miseries which ignorance and knavery have so long entailed upon a large portion of the human race? Is this the part which a free, a humane, and an enlightened people, a nation itself professing principles diametrically opposite to those in question, has engaged to act towards its own subjects? It would be too absurd to maintain that any engagement of this kind exists;—that great Britain is under any obligation, direct or implied, to uphold errors and usages, gross and fundamentally subversive of *the first principles of reason, morality and religion. In Hindostan, mothers of families are taken from the midst of their children, who have just lost their father also, and by a most diabolical complication of force and fraud are driven into the flames! Shall we be in all time to come as we have hitherto been, passive spectators of this unnatural wickedness?** The Marquis Wellesley when Governor General of India in 1805, addressing the principal Law Court in Calcutta, expressly

* Par. Papers, Vol. v. 1827, p. 33.

stated it to be, "one of the fundamental maxims of the British Government to consult the religious opinions, customs, and prejudices of the natives, in all cases in which it has been practicable, *consistent with the principles of morality, reason, and humanity.*" "We have indeed made a treaty with India but not in defiance of the law of nature;—we have entered into a compact, but not with crime and bloodshed; not at the price of life, nor amidst the groans and sufferings of our common humanity. The moment a religious rite infringes upon the laws of society, its character is changed and it becomes a civil crime."* In the suppression of infanticide at Saugur; sitting Durna; exempting Brahmuns from the penalty of the law, &c. we have acted according to these sentiments, and the abolition of Suttees may be accomplished with equal facility and safety. This has been shown from the concurrent testimony of many Europeans resident in India, and from the Natives themselves. The rite is not an integral part of Hindoism, but an abuse fostered by the ignorant, superstitious, and unprincipled. It is an evident and imperious duty of Britian to spread her protecting shield over these defenceless widows and orphans.

"Who that sees Great Britain yet upon her throne, after a conflict in which she has survived the united assaults of the European nations and has equally triumphed over the arts and arms of her oriental enemies—who that beholds her 'sitting as a queen,' and after having humbled the Tyrant of Europe and raised the nations he had oppressed, now legislating in peace, for her own remote Empire in the East; —who that beholds her enriched by commerce, and ennobled by conquest, will hesitate to pronounce that this is peculiarly the time to interpose for the deliverance of her own subjects from the oppression of a sanguinary superstition, and to prove to the world that she has herself been preserved amidst surrounding ruin, for no ordinary purposes."† And what can be those purposes, but being the eminently honoured means of promoting the universal diffusion of the principles of that Gospel by which the language of prophecy shall be fulfilled:—"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee.—They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

* Poynder's Speech, p. 13—15. † p. 214.

A VOICE FROM INDIA; OR

THE HORRORS OF A SUTTEE.

WHAT means that gloomy funeral pyre,
On Ganges' banks its tall head raising,
And those red gleams of murky fire,
E'en now around its broad base blazing?
What mean those wild and frantic yells,
As from a thousand throats resounding,
With drums and trumpet's awful peals,
From distant hills and woods rebounding?

Ah! 'tis a dark and murderous deed,
Which cruel Brahmuns there are doing,
Well may the heart turn sick, and bleed,
While such a dreadful theme pursuing!
For see! on that detested pile,
By her lord's corpse the widow lying,
While Moloch, with a fiendish smile,
Looks on, and views his victim dying.

See how she writhes! hark to her screams,
As now the lurid flames enfold her!
But all is vain, no pity gleams
In the stern face of one beholder!
Her kindred stand with hearts of stone,
Cased by the demon Superstition;
Hear her last agonizing groan,
Nor heave a sigh at her condition!

Ye British matrons, husbands, sires,
Your souls with soft compassion glowing,
O! haste to quench the horrid fires
Whence human blood is daily flowing!
With your lov'd King and Country plead,
Implore the Senate of your nation,
That British India may be freed
From scenes of such abomination.

And send, O! send the Gospel forth
To the dark haunts of superstition!
That they may learn a Saviour's worth,
And find in him sin's true remission.
Arise, thou Sun of righteousness!
On heathen lands pour forth thy splendour;
Then love and peace their homes shall bless,
And their steeled hearts grow soft and tender.

Matlock Bath. ELLEN.

FINIS.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST EDITION,

"We strongly recommend to our readers the perusal of Mr. Peggs' Pamphlet, which to the feeling testimony of an *eye witness* of the horrible practice he describes, adds a mass of information and documents of the most valuable and decisive nature. We hope it will obtain a very general circulation." *Eclectic Review, June*, 1827.

"This interesting Pamphlet contains in seven Sections remarks on the following topics, (here enumerated,) which are every way deserving of serious perusal and extensive circulation. A great part of these observations have already been published in India, a circumstance which of itself goes very far to prove that nothing but criminal supineness or disgraceful timidity prevents the speedy and entire termination of this cruel and murderous practice. O when shall the time come, that the blood of poor innocents shall no longer defile our possessions!" *Christian Guardian, June.*

"We feel persuaded, when this Publication shall become generally known, it will not fail to awaken public sympathy in behalf of those victims of priestcraft, idolatry, and persecution, who now seem destined to perish in the flames." *Imperial Magazine, July.*

"Many laudable attempts are now made to call public attention to the practice of burning widows alive in British India, the ultimate result of which will doubtless be the suppression of that horrid practice by the mild power of British law. In the mean time it becomes every good man to use all prudent and constitutional means to hasten an object so devoutly to be wished. The able Pamphlet before us, contains much information collected from the most authentic sources." *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, June.*

"This excellent Pamphlet is evidently the result of much labour and research, and is well calculated to promote the benevolent design the Author has in view. We shall be happy to hear that it has an extensive circulation." *Baptist Magazine, June.*

"Two principal objections are usually urged against the interference of the Magistrate to forbid the tragic exhibition of Suttees. It is said, they form a part of the religion of the Hindoos, and therefore cannot be forcibly suppressed without violating the principles of toleration on which the British Government in India have uniformly acted ; and that the Natives are so strongly attached to the practice, that any attempt to abolish it by the strong arm of the law, would be attended with hazard to the peace of the country. Both these objections the Author of this seasonable Pamphlet has fairly considered, and, in our opinion, completely refuted. If the inhabitants of highly favoured Britain be excited by the discussions of this important subject to stand forward and express their decided opinion to the Legislature, we have no doubt of ultimate success. To aid, direct, and animate the friends of humanity in these laudable efforts is the object of this cheap and valuable Pamphlet. We esteem it to be well adapted for this purpose, and most cordially wish it success. *Gen. Baptist Repository, June.*

"If the Hon. Company do not take some speedy steps to abolish Suttees and the Tax of Juggernaut, we trust there will speedily be addressed to the Legislature of this country such a declaration of the public Christian mind of the land, as will compel the adoption of measures, dictated not less by justice, benevolence, and sound policy, than by the laws of God. That our Government possesses the power to abolish these enormities is unquestionable ; and that it may safely exercise the power no man can entertain any reasonable doubt who reads the powerful and convincing statements of Mr. Poynder and Mr. Peggs. We trust these subjects will never be lost sight of till the desirable and practicable consummation has been attained." *Congregational Magazine, Jan. and Feb.* 1828.

See also Mis. Register (June,) Asiatic Journal (Aug.) Particular Bap. Mag. (Nov.) and Sailor's Mag. (Sep.)

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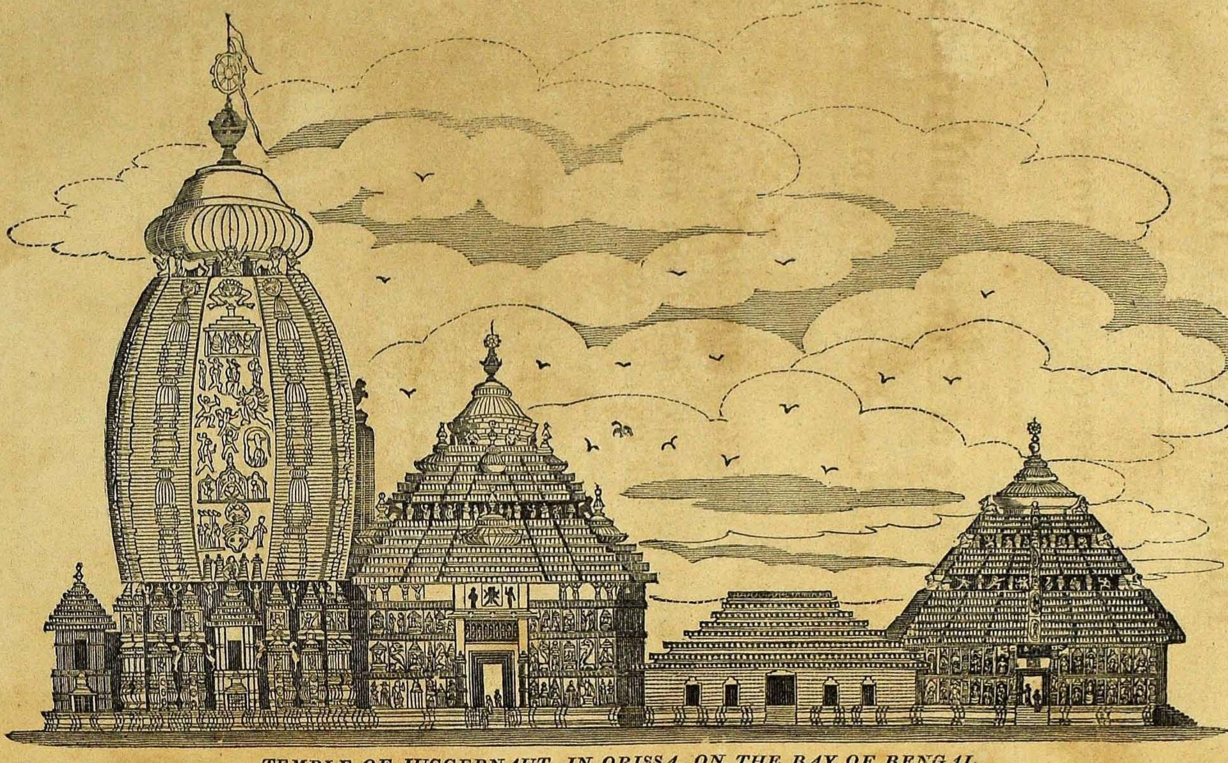

TEMPLE OF JUGGERNAUT, IN ORISSA, ON THE BAY OF BENGAL